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THE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF RICHELIEU

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# The Economic Policies of Richelieu

BY

FRANKLIN CHARLES PALM, PH. D.

Assistant Professor of Modern European History  
in the University of California





*To my Father and Mother*



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## THE ECONOMIC POLICIES OF RICHELIEU

Car chacun sait que, quoique vous fassiez,  
En guerre, en paix, en voyage, en affaires,  
Vous vous trouvez toujours dessus vos pieds.

— *Works of Voiture*, II, 426-7.

Edition Ubicini.





## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

If one were to ask the average well informed individual concerning the career of the Cardinal de Richelieu, the reply would be one which would convey little more than an intelligent appreciation of the political acts of this great and interesting man, for these have been regarded as constituting the dominant phase of his life. His genius along this line was clearly brought out in his conduct of the French participation in the Thirty Years' War, his settlement of the religious question in France, and his relations with foreign powers, the nobility, the Pope, the Queen Mother, and other eager opponents of his ideas. "One is accustomed by habit to consider Richelieu in his struggle against Austria on the outside, the nobles and Protestants on the inside, as only a diplomat of keen and profound conceptions, a statesman advancing to his designs with an unflinching energy, the founder of the absolute monarchy."<sup>1</sup>

There is another side to his career which had no inconsiderable importance in directing and influencing his entire life and achievements, namely, the economic phase. History has placed such an emphasis on the other part of his life that it is difficult even to ask if economic interests held any place in that spirit which was agitated by such great designs. For example, did Richelieu have an economic purpose in his capture of La Rochelle? Was his aim in entering the Thirty Years' War purely political? Did the Cardinal have an economic philosophy? It is to be the purpose of this study to determine the economic elements which entered into the life and deeds of Richelieu, and thereby to establish the claim that this man was not only a magnificent statesman, but also an able economist, with all the crude but important economic conceptions of his time. To build France up as a strong unit, both political and economic, was

<sup>1</sup> Pigeonneau, H., *Histoire du Commerce de la France*, 2 vols., Paris, 1889, II, 375.

the goal of his ambition, which a premature death prevented him from reaching.

The economic aspect of Richelieu's achievements has been generally neglected, although it has been noticed by a few writers. One says that "most historians have glided rapidly over the economic side of Richelieu's career."<sup>2</sup> Others have claimed that there is a gap in our general histories, and that, if Richelieu had despised or neglected economic problems it would have shown a weakness in his spirit. Yet, far from putting them back to second place, he brought them to the front and studied them with passion. He certainly did not impart second-rate ideas in his treatment of commerce, the marine, and colonization.<sup>3</sup> Another writer who has treated Richelieu's career from the administrative point of view, claims that the Cardinal's work as an administrator was not inferior to his political ability. He created in all directions a vigorous impulsion to national energy, which if continued along those lines would have produced wonderful results.<sup>4</sup> The same writer in defending the case of Richelieu as far as concerns his entire administrative career has succeeded in bringing to light the economic aspect of the man. In fact, most of his administrative reforms were of direct or indirect economic importance. When he proceeds to point out the fact that Richelieu centralized the monarchy and laid France open to administrative reforms,—by ruining the political positions of the Protestants and the nobles, by giving the council of state a superior place, by diminishing the power of local government and establishing fixed duties in the *généralités* —<sup>5</sup> he really indicates the first steps taken toward an economic reform of the country which Richelieu fully intended to carry through. Many difficulties, however, prevented the great minister from accomplishing all he desired. Most people have neglected to take these into consideration and thus he has been denied a fair judgment of his career upon the economic side.

His great internal and external achievements seem im-

<sup>2</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 375-6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 376.

<sup>4</sup> Caillet, J, *L'Administration en France sous le Ministère du Cardinal de Richelieu*, Paris, 1857, Introduction, I-IV.

<sup>5</sup> Caillet, Introduction, I-IV.

possible when one considers his poor physical health.<sup>6</sup> Sick throughout his life, one wonders how he was able to carry out or even to conceive the things he did. Then there were the many external and internal difficulties to be removed, some of which were of a sort directly opposed to the material development of any nation, as the Huguenot situation, for example. Indeed, says one writer, the historian who studies the greatest statesman France ever had without considering the gravity of the internal situation at that time and the many difficulties of the internal organization; without appreciating the diversity of provinces, and the multiplicity of their franchises; without seeing the clash of religious beliefs, the variety of taxes, customs, etc., in permanent conflict; without considering the immense interests of the kingdom and the conditions of its power and security, will never comprehend either the power or the ability of this man, or the genius of his work.<sup>7</sup> The pressing need to attack these many difficulties is best illustrated in the opening passages of Richelieu's *Testament Politique*, where he maintained that his first problems were to ruin the political power of the Huguenots, lower the pride of the nobles, reduce all rebellious subjects to their duties, and raise the king's name again in foreign affairs to the place where it ought to be.<sup>8</sup>

A good example of the difficulties encountered by Richelieu is shown in the opposition of public opinion or sections of it. In fact in 1626 he was accused of ruining the rights and interests of France by remaining at peace. This accusation was voiced by some so-called "*libelles*" in Germany, who saw no good in his actions.<sup>9</sup> However, it is interesting to notice that the "theologians" in reply maintain that the reasons which guided the king and the Cardinal with regard to the so-called resolutions of peace are unrecognized by his opponents. "Why not praise what has been accomplished rather than condemn what has not been carried out? Since you bear the names of Christians would it not be better to judge those things which are beneath the

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, VI-IX.

<sup>7</sup> Monterétien, A., *Traité de l'Oeconomie Politique*, Ed., Th. Funck-Brentano, Paris, 1889, Introduction, XCI.

<sup>8</sup> Richelieu, A. J., Cardinal, duc de, *Testament Politique*, Londres, 1770, pt. I, 8-26.

<sup>9</sup> *Mercurie François*, le (1604-44), à Paris, XII, 516-18.

surface rather than to condemn the surface indications?" In other words criticised by some because he fostered wars, and by others because he made peace, his problems were very modern indeed, and it is no wonder that many sides of his career (the economic for example) have been submerged because of a mistaken perspective of the difficulties involved.

It seems profitable, therefore, to dwell for a while upon the economic activities of Richelieu and to show that most phases of his administration were more or less influenced by them. To trace the economic thread is the problem of this study. This involves an examination of its importance in the confusing unsolved period of the first half of the seventeenth century, the age of Richelieu.

## CHAPTER II

### THE AGE OF MERCANTILISM

The seventeenth century was distinctly the age when mercantilism reached its height. Mercantilism was the natural outcome of a series of historical events which caused men to grasp and understand the economic theories of the doctrine without realizing that they really were developing a distinct school of economic thought. It did not take long, however, to discover and to formulate, along definite lines, the philosophy behind it, once it had become the cardinal feature of the nation's development. It is desirable to distinguish some of the important factors which led to the practical application of mercantilistic ideas and the consequent theoretical formulation, because, as will be shown, Richelieu based his entire administration on the principles of the mercantilistic doctrine and in doing so was one of the most enlightened exponents of that system.

The mercantilistic age seems to fall in the period of transition from medieval to modern conditions, and really grew out of those changes. "In fact," says one writer, "the decomposition of medieval feudal life into modern existence is one of the two chief aspects of modern life."<sup>1</sup> He goes on to say that the new system based on individual activity and scientific conviction has superseded the old military activity and supernatural beliefs of the middle age. Thus he maintains that industry has been substituted for warfare. It often seems better to consider industry as another cause for warfare. Moreover, the beginnings of the separation of church and state, the growth of commerce and industries, and the discovery of the new world with all its important consequences had a strong influence in developing the modern era to the detriment of the medieval age with its feudalistic basis of existence. They resulted in the growth of the state as the vital force which was to expel all

<sup>1</sup> Bridges, F. H., *France under Richelieu and Colbert, Edinburgh, 1866*, 5-10.

the needless and unhappy phases of the past ages, and a new kind of feudalism came into existence in which the state, or its king, was the actual feudal lord and his subjects were his vassals. As a result when one reaches the stage in history where the state takes the lead in controlling the destinies of man, then appears the modern age and with it the so-called period of mercantilism.

As to a definition of the mercantilistic age, it may best be defined in terms of the state. "It is not," says Schmoller, "so much a doctrine of money or tariff barriers, protective duties, or navigation laws as it is a doctrine which involves something far greater, namely, the total transformation of society, and its organization as well as that of the state and its institutions, in the replacing of a local and territorial policy by that of the state. Now followed a struggle between state and district against the great nobility, the towns, the corporations, and provinces, the economical as well as the political blending of the struggle of these isolated groups into large wholes, the struggle for uniform measures and coinage and for a well ordered currency and credit."<sup>2</sup> Thus the mercantilistic doctrine was that philosophy which centered everything economic and political in the hands of the state.

When one assumes the general definition of Schmoller, that mercantilism implies state-building, it is also necessary to realize that this general idea includes a series of theories which prevailed to various degrees in different minds: in the first place, a tendency towards overestimating the importance of possessing a large amount of precious metals; secondly, towards an undue exaltation (a) of industry which works up material over industry which provides it, and (b) of foreign trade over domestic; thirdly, towards attaching too high a value to a dense population as an element of national strength; and fourthly, towards invoking the action of the state in furthering artificially the attainments of the several ends thus proposed as desirable.<sup>3</sup> Thus the three earmarks of the mercantile system are: (1) attention to commerce (the importance of which was exaggerated), (2) cultivation of a favorable balance of trade, (3) prohibition in

<sup>2</sup> Schmoller, G., *The Mercantile System*, New York, 1902, 51.

<sup>3</sup> Ingram, J. K., *History of Political Economy*, London, 1904, 36-37.

duties, bounties, and development of monopolies, etc.<sup>4</sup> All these things led to the struggle of nations not only for political but for economical predominance. States became, as it were, artificial hothouses for the rearing of urban industries, etc.<sup>5</sup> Most of these characteristics will be found existing during the administration of the great Cardinal.

In following out the policies of his administration, Richelieu conformed approximately to the common mercantilistic conception as described above. In doing so he was especially fortunate in having certain predecessors to guide him in his actions. Henry IV and his minister, Sully, laid the foundation or at least made the excavations for the economic system of that century. The economist Montchrétien drew up in 1615 the first French work on the subject of economics. Its crude but timely ideas correspond to the theoretical basis for Richelieu's administration. It represented the thought of the time and so Richelieu, whether he read it or not, followed its precepts with astonishing accuracy. This work together with the contributions of Henry IV and Sully requires brief consideration.

The age of Henry IV and Sully marked the rise in France of a consciousness of the economic side of life. People had not been really aware of its presence in the fifteenth century. The progress of public peace and well being, the influence of the Italian custom, had given to the commerce of luxuries an impulse hitherto unknown. The age of discoveries had awakened the enterprise of the Norman mariners who began following in the tracks of the Portuguese and Spanish navigators about the same time as the English.<sup>6</sup> Thus France began to assume a place of economic as well as political importance in the affairs of the world. As a consequence the men at the head of the government, whether they were kings or prime ministers, began to consider and solve matters which were primarily of economic importance, on that basis alone, and were influenced in their political policies by the economic results to be obtained thereby.

Louis XI, at the close of the fifteenth century, initiated the economic growth of France especially by his centralization and

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 50.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 39.

<sup>6</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 54-55.

unification of the government. But it was left to Henry IV and Sully, who came in after the religious wars, at the end of the sixteenth century, to make the first direct efforts to solve the commercial questions confronting the French nation.

The first problem encountered was the proposition of securing internal peace. The edict of Nantes settled the matter so far as the religious strife was concerned. The nobles were also subdued by a combination of payments and force. Thus in a short time both Henry and Sully were ready to strengthen the economic position of France. Now at this time existed the peculiar situation where a king and his helper both had their own ideas on the subject and tried to carry them out regardless of the opinion of the other party. For example, Henry IV endeavored to make France, and especially Paris, the artistic and industrial center of the world, much to the disgust of Sully, who favored the encouragement of agriculture.<sup>7</sup> As a consequence, France at this time underwent a temporary expansion in agriculture, industry, colonies, the marine, and internal and external commerce.

By their accomplishments Henry IV and Sully laid, in a more or less haphazard and incomplete way, the foundations which Richelieu and Colbert were to complete or ruin. One writer aptly sums up the work of Henry IV as follows: "He did his best to facilitate the downfall of the old system (feudal) and to encourage the new. He tried to remove the shackles upon industry and commerce; to improve the finances and found trans-Atlantic colonies, etc. He looked forward to a common European arbitration agreement, of a universal peace, and to accomplish this which might be by others defined as a policy of the balance of power, he set in motion the movement against the forces of retardation, namely Austria and Spain."<sup>8</sup> In other words, the policy of Henry IV was directed in one way along the line of international relations, and thus, while attention was given to the building up of the state, it was not the central theme of his administration. However, all of these excellent and well planned policies were ended when Henry IV was killed in 1610, and fourteen years of economic, as well as political stagnation, were to follow.

<sup>7</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 289-290.

<sup>8</sup> Bridges, 25-26.



A certain writer says that "the death of Henry IV was deplorable in that the brilliant impulses which he had impressed on the economic life of the country were stopped and existed no more."<sup>9</sup> This is not wholly true, for one can find in the treatise of Montchrétien a clear presentation of the doctrine of the time, and this work had a definite influence on the economic future of France. Yet, in a practical sense, the tasks of Henry IV were incomplete. "The peasants existed but that was all; credit and commerce reestablished themselves with difficulty; the systems of roads and canals were only outlined; colonial experiences had only begun and habits of order, of economy, and of honesty, which Sully had introduced into the financial administration, had not yet become traditions, etc."<sup>10</sup>

It would be interesting to speculate upon what might have occurred if the rule of Richelieu had succeeded that of Henry IV in 1610. But as it actually happened, the government declined rapidly under Marie de Médicis. She was not able to understand or follow the good policy of her husband. The money saved by Sully was spent, taxes increased, colonies and the marine were neglected, and the new colonial policy was saved only through the energy and ability of Champlain.<sup>11</sup>

The death of Henry IV then meant an industrial crisis both of a commercial and monetary nature. Troubles which he had settled appeared again. Foreign states disregarded treaties with France, excluded French commerce, sank French vessels, and imposed unfair duties upon French vessels entering their ports, in spite of the privileges they had in French harbors. Things went from bad to worse until finally in 1614 a meeting of the Estates general was called in a vain effort to remedy the situation.

The result of this gathering was not insignificant. Richelieu, in his Memoirs, says that the assembly ended as it began, by doing nothing to advantage for either the king or the public. "It was a financial burden in itself," he claims, "while the corruption it opposed still continued."<sup>12</sup> He fails, however,

<sup>9</sup> Gouraud, C. M., *Histoire de la Politique Commercial de la France et son Influence sur le Progrès de la Richesse Publique*, Paris, 1854, 174-175.

<sup>10</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 350-352.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> Richelieu, A. J., Cardinal, duc de, *Mémoires*, (Petitot Edition), vols. X-XXX, Paris, 1821-1829, X, 383.

to mention the fact that the king promised to carry out the reforms asked by the assembly and neglected to do so. The interesting features of the gathering are that it indicates a reaction against the bad conditions of the time, that Richelieu was present at the meeting and thus realized what was wrong, and finally, that Montchrétien was led to publish his *Traicté de l'oeconomie politique*, in which he planned a solution for the troubles of France. The Cardinal must have been strongly affected by these two events, and his later actions indicate that he was.<sup>13</sup> Thus, at the very beginning of his career economic problems were placed before him alongside of the beneficial, practical beginnings of Henry IV and Sully, so that he could not help but be influenced by all these things. It is important, indeed, that the ideas were furnished by an assembly of the people, and by the first French economist. Surely the modern world in a commercial sense, both practically and theoretically, began for France at that period.

Montchrétien was very careful in his work to develop his idea of a paternalistic form of government. "The education of the nation," he said, "is the same as in the family."<sup>14</sup> However, there are some liberal conceptions in this treatment, as he recognized the development of the third estate and a certain amount of individualism.<sup>15</sup> Furthermore, he maintained that the social organization extends beyond the interest of individuals and the family, of the locality and the province, or even the particular interest of the nation.<sup>16</sup> This idea involves a multiplicity of relations between the different divisions of the government and territories which only great men by their genius can comprehend, and by their position and resources can justify so as to increase the general prosperity, or, aided by science and guided by the experience of individuals, can the practice justify, according to the theories of political economy. In other words, he said that the situation called for a great man, and indeed a great leader in the person of Richelieu presently took

<sup>13</sup> Montchrétien based his work upon the accomplishments of Henry IV. Richelieu and Colbert carried out the industrial and commercial conceptions depicted in his treatise. See Montchrétien, Introduction, LXXXIX.

<sup>14</sup> Montchrétien, Introduction, LV.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, LVI.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, XXV.

advantage of the opportunity, and carried out the major part of the program outlined by Montchrétien. A brief summary of the leading ideas of this early economist may be given, arranged in relation to similar ideas or practices on the part of Richelieu.

He begins in his treatise by describing to the king the excellent resources and situation of France. Richelieu in his *Testament Politique* repeated Montchrétien's ideas almost verbatim.<sup>17</sup> He then complains that France lacks men to invent and to do. Too many of her men go to Spain, England, Germany, and Flanders. Richelieu had this same idea, as will be shown later. He then advocates the development of agriculture and manufactures, so important to the strength of a nation. The whole tone of the book is to "build up the power of the French nation with the rich resources available," — a true mercantilistic doctrine. He advises the king to study the commercial systems of England and Holland as accounting for their remarkable growth. Montchrétien continuously had the interests of France at heart and does not consider outside interests as Henry IV did. The Cardinal conforms with his view in this respect. Montchrétien recognizes both free trade and protection as combined and not separate. "Send your surplus abroad," he says, "but keep what you need and protect it." To carry out this idea both external and internal trade have important rôles. However, it is with foreign commerce that he is chiefly concerned, as was also the case with Richelieu.

"All society, generally speaking," he says, "seems to be composed of government and commerce."<sup>18</sup> Thus the merchants are an important class of people. The stress laid upon commerce by Richelieu will be shown later. Both believe that gold and silver are important, as they supply the necessities for all men; and it is interesting to note that both men in their ideas concerning commerce, industry, etc., constantly refer to the public good, whose interests they claim to follow.

Montchrétien devotes especial attention to commercial relations with England. That country he claims limits the use of the products of French industries in England, for her own benefit, while obtaining fair treatment for her own goods in

<sup>17</sup> *Testament Politique* II, 133-135.

<sup>18</sup> Montchrétien, 137-146.

France.<sup>19</sup> Everything possible is done to ruin French commerce by extra taxes, etc. England desires to get control of navigation. One thus can see that the commercial rivalry between France and England was coming to the front at this time, and it actually was to be one of the first problems confronting the Cardinal.

Montchrétien, on the other hand, admires Holland and desires France to be on good terms with her.<sup>20</sup> The fact that they are so near and have mutual interests makes it best to be on friendly terms. Richelieu also had a great admiration for what the Hollanders had accomplished. Both of them wished France to study her and imitate what she had done rather than actually to compete with her.

As to Spain, Montchrétien complains about the failure to treat French traders in Spain as Spanish traders are treated in France. He says, "French subjects are not allowed or permitted in Spain except if they wish to enrich the king of Spain. She is jealous of her colonies and taxes French traders unfairly."<sup>21</sup> As a result, he claims that it is the duty of the French to see that they are treated justly by the Spanish, as the Dutch have done for their own citizens. "For if Holland could do this, cannot we?" A policy of this nature will lead to the augmentation, the welfare, and the repose of France, and the employment and use of its most courageous subjects, who would like nothing better than to undertake long and difficult duties. By authorizing and protecting the trade of France, this policy will increase commerce. Spanish ships have orders to destroy all French vessels found on the ocean, whether they are Huguenot or Catholic. Thus it is the task of the king to restore the use of the sea, which is common and free to all the world, and on which the French have a natural and legitimate right. How well this part of his work was carried out by Richelieu, who believed in these ideas, will be brought out later. It may be added that no better proof of the early economic rivalry between England,

<sup>19</sup> Montchrétien, 196-197. Montchrétien believed that the severe treatment of foreigners originated by England had resulted in a commercial and monetary crisis. He opposed any concession to that nation except on the basis of reciprocity. See Montchrétien, 129-130, footnote; 134-135.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, 207-208.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 208-209.

Spain, and France can be obtained than in this treatise by Montchrétien, an enlightened contemporary.

Turning to the Levant, he urges the development of silk manufactures at home, instead of obtaining these articles from the Levant, a wasteful method because of the heavy duties imposed by the Levantine countries and Italy. He refers to the attempts of England to form a company in the Levant, and after affirming the fact that Russia constitutes a new outlet for trade, he turns to a discussion of colonization. He was a strong advocate of efforts along this line. Thus he advises the formation of companies like the Dutch East Indian company (the one formed in 1595). "Such companies," he says, "would make France strong and powerful."<sup>22</sup>

His treatment of financial conditions in France was based on the cardinal principle of preserving peace and quiet in the land and being fair with the people. He says that there were great riches in the land which would aid the true finances of the country. They were wheat, salt, wine, cloth, and silk. "This country is so flourishing and abundant in all that one can desire that it is not necessary to borrow from one's neighbors."<sup>23</sup> It is not at all the abundance of gold and silver, or the quantity of pearls and diamonds which makes the state wealthy, but it is the resources of things necessary to maintain life, etc. Montchrétien had absolute faith that the resources of France were such as to solve all financial troubles if used properly. Both Richelieu and the economist had a sublime trust in the ability of the French to overcome all commercial odds by this means. Both desired to conserve the people and make them happy. Just as the owner of a large plantation wants to build it up to its greatest extent, both economically and physically, so these two interesting men desired to build up France commercially and also to increase the happiness of the people, not only by internal means but by external additions of colonies to be obtained by the development of navigation.<sup>24</sup>

Now in order to put down the colonial rivals of France not only a strong army but a strong navy was needed. Like Riche-

<sup>22</sup> Montchrétien, 248-255.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 237-244.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 283.

lieu, Montchrétien discusses the geographical position of France with its two oceans, etc. He urges the development of the admiralty. Again, like the Cardinal, he cites the success of Holland on the sea. "If Henry IV had used his money to build up harbors instead of the useless canal de Braire, our commerce would be much greater than it is at present."<sup>25</sup> To develop commerce and a strong marine, and thereby make a strong state, was constantly in his mind. At this point it may be added that both Montchrétien and Richelieu advised the king to encourage the building of boats by financial support or to sell some vessels himself, to be used for trade outside of the kingdom. The very fact that the Cardinal as soon as he came into office turned his attention toward colonization, the building up of a marine, and commerce in general, indicates that he was strongly influenced by similar views, perhaps obtained from Montchrétien's treatise.<sup>26</sup>

Both men claimed that they were actuated by the purpose of "the public welfare," as being the greatest aim of the king. They appreciate the importance of each of the three estates. Richelieu emphasized that of the nobles, and Montchrétien the third estate. They both desired to increase the riches of the people by means of the development of the arts and manufactures, the increase of navigation, and the reestablishment of commerce, which was perishing day by day in the kingdom.<sup>27</sup> One cannot help but notice the similarity between the introduction of Richelieu's *Testament Politique* and Montchrétien's work. Both bring out the disorders of the time and the remedies to be undertaken in order to enrich the crown and the

<sup>25</sup>Montchrétien, 306-308.

<sup>26</sup> For further views of Montchrétien concerning the duties of the King, the people, the Estates General, the finances and the laws, all of which are closely related to Richelieu's ideas, see Montchrétien, 336-354.

<sup>27</sup> Montchrétien, 3, note. An interesting comparison might be made of this quotation of Montchrétien's with one of Richelieu's, regarding the government. "Si la nature des disorders ou vous vivons maintenant portait que vous fissiez deux reformatiōs différentes, l'une à l'appétit du commun, et l'autre par les vrayes maximes d'état et de police que l'usage des affaires vous apprend je ne doute point que le semblable n'arrivast."

Richelieu: "Il semble, fait dire Richelieu à Louis XIII dans le preambule de la déclaration de 1641, que l'établissement des monarches étant fondé par le gouvernement d'un seul, cet ordre est comme l'âme que anime et que leur inspire autant de force et de vigueur qu'a et de perfection."

state. There seems to be no doubt in the mind of Montchrétien's editor that Richelieu did read the work. "Richelieu," he said, "was the deputy of the clergy at the Estates General when Montchrétien published his treatise, so not only the industrial and commercial measures of the Cardinal, but also the maxims on commerce, the marine, and manufactures which one finds in his *Testament Politique*, reflect the spirit of Montchrétien."<sup>28</sup>

Other writers have similar views on this issue. For example, one maintains that Richelieu's theories concerning commerce and navigation were not original. "He borrowed or derived them from documents of the reign of Henry IV, of which the cahiers of the assembly of notables of 1617 and 1627, and the Estates General of 1614 were one source and Montchrétien's *Traicté d'Oeconomie Politique* was another, from which the Cardinal obtained many of his views."<sup>29</sup> Another writer brings out the fact that Montchrétien provided the colonial formula for Richelieu to follow. "As regards colonial companies," he says, "Montchrétien recalls the methods followed by Holland and England, forestalling Richelieu or rather giving him a formula."<sup>30</sup> (He refers to the Cardinal's speech at the assembly of notables, to be taken up later.) Montchrétien claimed that there was no better way to carry on colonies than by societies such as Holland used, or a council of many individuals instead of one individual effort. So colonial exploitation by privileged companies is the means advised by the economist. He is thus in that respect the inspirer of the political economy of Richelieu. He has formulated all the economic principles of the seventeenth century and is the first and the most penetrating of the seventeenth century economists. This study will attempt to show how Richelieu took up many of his ideas and tried to put them into execution.

That the Cardinal ever read the book is not known because he has never, so far as can be ascertained, mentioned the name of Montchrétien in his writings. The similarity, however, between the views of the two would indicate that the Cardinal

<sup>28</sup> Montchrétien, Introduction, XX-XXI.

<sup>29</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 381-382.

<sup>30</sup> Deschamps, L., *Histoire de la Question Coloniale en France*, Paris, 1891, 61-62.

did so. The letters and memoirs of Richelieu prove that he was interested in these problems, and the fact that he favored literary efforts of all kinds, and would be likely to read a treatise dedicated to the<sup>e</sup> Queen Mother and her son Louis XIII, strengthens the probability of his having read it. The important deduction to be made is the existence of a general economic tendency both theoretical and practical in France when Richelieu came to power. The mercantilistic doctrine with the state as a center was the natural commercial philosophy for a statesman to follow. And while this statement might seem to detract from the originality of Richelieu's beliefs, this is not so when one looks into the matter. For, although a man may not conceive a view, it takes a certain amount of genius and originality to make the practical application. The ideas of Montchrétien required economic statesmanship of a high grade. (An inquiry may now be made whether the Cardinal possessed that quality together with his political capacity.) Was Cardinal Richelieu not only a political but also an economic statesman? To what extent did he continue the practical accomplishments of Henry IV and Sully, and carry out the theories of Montchrétien?



### CHAPTER III

#### THE ECONOMIC RELATIONS EXISTING BETWEEN RICHELIEU, THE KING, AND THE THREE ESTATES

Richelieu from the first took the tasks confronting the King, the people and himself with intense seriousness. Dominated by his paternalistic conception of the King as the father of the people, responsible only to God, he desired to do everything he could to enable the King to build up a strong mercantilistic state of which he was the sole owner. In his general scheme of government all classes had their particular places and obligations. This idea was true even of the Cardinal himself. Loyal to the individual who could alone represent the French nation, whom he loved so well, the Cardinal at the beginning pledged his fidelity, saying, "I will do all that will be possible, for, by following the good inclinations of the king, one receives an assured repose, the fruit of the service which I render his majesty according to my duty."<sup>1</sup> In his *Testament Politique* he recalls his first ambitions when called to office. "As soon as your majesty was pleased to admit me into the management of your affairs, I resolved to use my utmost efforts to facilitate your great designs, so useful to the state and glorious to your person."<sup>2</sup> One sees from the start the constant strife to obtain all advantages possible for the king and the state, and no better illustration can be given of the unselfish interest of the man apart from personal gain than his constant fidelity to his ruler and the latter's welfare.

Richelieu did, to be sure, look after his own personal fortune. His "Will and Testament" proves that he left great wealth,<sup>3</sup> most of which he bequeathed to his relatives. It also shows

<sup>1</sup> Richelieu, A. J., Cardinal, due de, *Lettres, Instructions Diplomatiques*, etc., Ed., G. Comte d'Avenel. Paris, 1853-1877, III, 159.

<sup>2</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 8-9.

<sup>3</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, X, 122.

his own personal commercial ability. A good share of his money, land, etc., was obtained by gifts from the king. He refused, however, many attempts of the rulers to bestow pensions on him, and indeed maintained that at the court the minister must not think of making a personal fortune but must plan only for the development of the welfare of the state,<sup>4</sup> which he must have seen would in the end benefit him. Yet it is clear that the Cardinal looked upon his office as meaning something other than a mere money making proposition and a means of obtaining high honor.<sup>5</sup>

In 1624 Richelieu came into power as first councillor. At once he began to carry out the duties of his office according to his mercantilistic belief, by recognizing the two elements which he must consider and whose welfare he must constantly promote by advice and deeds, namely, the king and the people, or the king and the state (including the people). "The greatest obligation of a man is the saving of his soul," he says, "the most important duty of the king is the repose of his subjects, the conservation of the state in its entirety, and the welfare of his government; for which reason, it is necessary to put down so severely the injuries done to the state, that the severity of the vengeance will prevent a recurrence. The repose of the state is the dominant thing."<sup>6</sup> The welfare of the nation, politically and economically, is the main theme of all his writings. Indeed, he says that the king has the right to do anything, even though it is against religion, to save his state.<sup>7</sup> No better expression can be given of the political and economic ideas of Richelieu. One even finds a tinge of the conception of a larger field than the mere state, when he says that the king must be liberal but only at the right time. He must reward merit. For that not only does the public but the entire world a service of which the reward to the state is only a partial return of the huge interest.<sup>8</sup>

The works of Richelieu revealed a suppressed fear of the inability of the king to look out for the country. The reason for

<sup>4</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 204-205.

<sup>5</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, 1, Introduction, 4-5.

<sup>6</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXII, 15. *Lettres*, II, 168 et seq., III, 159.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 285.

<sup>8</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 196.

this state of mind is clear when one remembers the political weaknesses which existed through the youth and ineffectiveness of the king, as well as the unfortunate economic condition of France in 1624. The king's power was in a bad way. "Indeed some people even brought up the idea of electing a ruler. But the majority with Richelieu believed that the absolute power of the ruler was best for the welfare of the country. He made the king the incarnation of public safety and interest."<sup>9</sup> The Cardinal in his *Testament Politique* has clearly stated his position as related to the king when he says that the ruler must act according to reason and public interest. In this respect he would choose men to carry out those things he could not do. By their working together, he had no doubt that the greatest good for France would result.<sup>10</sup> "For," he says, "nothing ought to divert us from a good enterprise. We must do all we can to carry through those things we undertake with reason."<sup>11</sup>

Thus one cannot fail to see the common, though unconscious, economic conceptions of that time which dominated Richelieu in his ideas concerning his duties as minister, and those of the king his master. It is a mercantilistic state he pictures, with the king as its earthly owner. Therefore it is the chief concern of those who govern this piece of property to see that the people who work on it, namely the subjects, are taken care of; that their welfare is aided, and also that the state in a national sense is to be developed to its fullest extent. By doing so a strong state would be created, a credit to its king and its ministers, whose constant aim must be the welfare of France. What was his attitude with regard to the Three Estates?

Richelieu, following the traditional French scheme, divided the people of France into three classes and considered all individuals as related to one of these orders.<sup>12</sup> They were the nobility, the clergy, and the third estate, which included the rest of the people. However it is an interesting fact that the Cardinal looked

<sup>9</sup> Caillet, 26.

<sup>10</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 197-199.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 265. Richelieu's efficiency in governing is best illustrated in that part of the *Testament Politique* in which he advises the King to consider the important things and not to bother with the details. See Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 195.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 182.

upon all these classes as constituting one people, and when he attacked any class or sect of individuals, such as the Huguenots, he did so for the public good, that is, the benefit of all. As a consequence it was said that while the general public praised him, individuals hated him and tried to bring about his fall.<sup>13</sup> His efforts to reform the finances and to build up commerce and colonies were, in general terms, the lines along which he tried to aid the people, instead of particular groups. Centralization of the government was the only efficient way by which they could be benefited. His efforts to bring this about, illustrate only too well the economic and political purposes involved. Yet in treating the people as a whole he had to consider their various classes and the rights due to each.<sup>14</sup> He recognized the system as being for the best, but in doing so he constantly had in view the welfare of the state. The class in which he placed the highest hopes were the nobles, who he believed were destined to play the leading part in the destinies of France.

In his treatment of this section of the population of his native land, the Cardinal had constantly in mind the welfare of the nation. This is shown by the fact that he confronted and attempted to solve two problems with respect to them. Namely, first to prevent them from being politically independent of the central government, and secondly, to make them useful members of society and the state. What he did with respect to depriving the nobility of political rights will be taken up in the next chapter. But one might add, that when Richelieu ordered in 1626 the razing of the castles and chateaus of the nobles,<sup>15</sup> a measure which was the outcome of his opposition to the separate political power of the nobility (which began as far back as 1617),<sup>16</sup> he changed the entire economic policy of France, not only in the increase of internal freedom of trade but in the altered position of the noble class.<sup>17</sup> They were no longer independent of the central government socially, politically, or eco-

<sup>13</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIV, 191.

<sup>14</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 81.

<sup>15</sup> Isambert, A. E., *Recueil Général des Anciennes Lois Françaises, etc.*, 29 vols., Paris, 1829, XVI, 192-193.

<sup>16</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, II, 6.

<sup>17</sup> Rambaud, A., *Histoire de la Civilisation Française*, 2 vols., Paris, 1898, I, 574.

nomically. They were subject to the will of the state. This concept was just a part of the plan of Richelieu "to put down the turbulent nobles and obtain by that means repose for the common people, prosperity for the king, and increased grandeur for the monarchy."<sup>18</sup>

However, when Richelieu had deprived this class of people of their independent powers, he did not oppress them and try to push them down into the lower estate. On the contrary he favored them. He looked at them not only from a political but also from an economic point of view; and saw in them "one of the principal sinews of the state, capable of contributing much to its conservation and establishment."<sup>19</sup> In fact he and the king shared the same views, for the latter called them "the right arms of the state."<sup>20</sup>

Richelieu tried to make a definite use of the nobles. He saw that they could fit into certain positions, especially those which were rewarded with many honors. "His ability to converse with the world, etc. . . . all adapt him to certain functions."<sup>21</sup> So that if Richelieu wanted to deprive them of their political right to oppose the government, he also desired to find a method by which they could live with dignity and serve their country both in a political and economical sense.

Not only Richelieu but many of the nobles themselves desired a part in the upbuilding of France. In a statement of their condition presented to the king by the assembly of notables in 1627, one obtains a fair idea of their ambitions. The exposition begins with an account of the distressing condition of the nobles, who are without any power or purpose. They then ask for the reestablishment of the nobility "as the greatest power to upbuild France, and to remedy its miserable condition." Mention is made of their former splendor and service. They are now in poverty and without power and are oppressed. Unwarranted abuses by some of their number (by many as a matter of fact) has deprived them of the administration of justice, finance, and all the councils of the king. "Aid us, and put us in our former place, and the kingdom will gain thereby

<sup>18</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XI, 244-256.

<sup>19</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 141.

<sup>20</sup> *Mercure François*, XVII, 65.

<sup>21</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 141. et seq.

and your reign will be more glorious and have a greater splendor.”<sup>22</sup> However they showed their selfishness when they asked for control of governmental, church, and army offices and other unreasonable favors. The fundamental thing was that they desired a more active part in the government. “Herein is where Richelieu erred,” says one writer, “in not giving them a more important place in the administration of the government, as a way of safe-guarding the right and well being of the nobility.”<sup>23</sup> Yet, judging from their demand it is doubtful whether the nobles ought to have been considered. Nevertheless the Cardinal did make efforts to use them for the good of the nation.

He devotes a section of the *Testament Politique* to the different means of aiding the nobility and making them subsist honorably. “They must be respected,” he says, “as one of the principal sinews of the state, capable of contributing much towards its preservation and settlement. Having been injured by vast numbers of business men, who have been elevated at their expense, it is my duty to protect them against any attempts of such individuals. Yet the people under the nobility must be protected from certain offices. It is a common fault in those that are born in a certain order to exert violence against the people to whom God seems to have given arms with which to get their livelihood rather than to defend themselves.”<sup>24</sup> In this statement one sees the entire attitude of Richelieu. He did not oppose the nobility because he had any prejudice against them, but he did stand against them in so far as they were a detriment to the whole state in that they interfered with the economic contribution of the third estate, one part of the country.

In order to aid them he carried out several of the demands of the assembly of notables. For example, he established a military school for young nobles, who were to be trained to administer and develop the nation within and extend and protect it abroad.<sup>25</sup> They were to have a part in the government, but were to be trained for their work and could only keep their positions by great services and superiority of ideas.<sup>26</sup> The

<sup>22</sup> *Mercurie François*, XII, 40-46.

<sup>23</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 376-377.

<sup>24</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 141-146.

<sup>25</sup> Isambert, XVI, 466-470.

<sup>26</sup> Caillet, 122.

very fact that the nobility realized this made them ask for the military school. This request was an effort to stay the decadence of the class.

Efforts were made to aid the nobles in other ways. Many were given good positions and favors to keep them in line with the government. For example, "Chateauneuf was granted a better governmental position in spite of his bad intentions toward the government."<sup>27</sup> "Indeed," Richelieu says, "common people were replaced by nobles in the king's household because it would increase the number of those who are to help the people bear the burden of taxation, which they are overwhelmed with at present."<sup>28</sup> This is an economic way of looking at the problem. The Cardinal was willing to do all he could to help the poor people, but he regarded the privileges of the nobles as something necessary and a part of the natural order of events.

The fact that the Cardinal desired the nobles to enter all phases of French life and thus, through their abilities, help in the development of France, is best illustrated by his provision that they were to be allowed to engage in commerce without loss of honor.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, individuals were ennobled because of their successful colonial or commercial ventures. He thus strove to bring the exclusive order down to the everyday phases of life, and while he recognized their privilege, he wanted them to retain these only in so far as earned by economic or political efforts. The ultimate goal was to be of course the building up of the state. He really intended to make this class the brains and administration of the country. The older men were to formulate the plans of government and the younger men were to carry them out.<sup>30</sup> He desired to use these men as official agents in the development of France politically and economically as well. The inefficient corrupt character of the members of the noble class prevented the success of the plan, and in the long run brought on the French Revolution and their ruin. They wanted a political pension and not an economic position.

But after all, the great thing that Richelieu accomplished with respect to the nobles was to ruin their individual

<sup>27</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 40-45.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 215-217.

<sup>29</sup> *Mercure François*, XII, 36 40.

<sup>30</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 24 25.

political power and open to them opportunities to serve the state politically or commercially, a course of action certainly worthy of a statesman. That he weakened this class by adding to them by means of the creation of titles because of activities in the field of literature or in the field of commerce, is very true. But what better proof is there of his economic tendencies? He realized that the sale of offices to the nobles was bad and tried to stop it, but he could not bring about a reform in one night, as he admitted.<sup>31</sup> In opening to the nobility the chance to engage in political or commercial opportunities whereby the state was to be strengthened, he acted in keeping with his economic and political views,<sup>32</sup> and with the fundamental theory of mercantilism.

The same viewpoint was true with regard to the clergy, "In conformity with his doctrine of the state, Richelieu opposed ultramontaniam and proclaims," says one writer, "the absolute independence of civil power and the necessity of a national clergy."<sup>33</sup> To be plain the Cardinal desired the clergy to join their interests with those of the nation. In fact the church had something more than a religious influence in France at that time. "It was an age of hospitals and schools which were conducted by the clergy. They were the leaders of philanthropic work."<sup>34</sup> Richelieu as Bishop of Luçon was well aware of the importance of that class, and indeed tried to use his position to diminish the oppression of the common people. Thus he wanted them to use their powers for the interest of the state and its economic and social betterment. Indeed, he said that he preferred the welfare of the king and the grandeur of the state to the interest of Rome, even though he was of the clerical order. That in brief explains his attitude. He desired a national clergy.

On the other hand some of the clergy recognized this position taken by the Cardinal. They appreciated the fact that he desired the unity of all the people in France for their common conservation. "Your majesty," said one of their representa-

<sup>31</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 165-167.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 141-147.

<sup>33</sup> Caillet, 55.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 60-62.



tives, "treats offensively and defensively, solely for the protection of the altar of France from the enemy." They outwardly, at least, then joined the king and his administration "whether it would be to keep up commerce or preserve the security of the state in common defense, knowing that the sovereign law of political government is the safety of the people."<sup>35</sup> Thus they promised to do all they could to keep up the glory of the state. This action indicates that at least a part of the clergy appreciated the attitude Richelieu took towards them, and wanted to "do their bit" towards developing the nation, even in keeping up commerce.

Richelieu considered the clergy as being capable of serving in other capacities besides the religious side of affairs. (Doubtless he was thinking of his own case.) For instance, he says that the churchmen are best for public tasks because they have less self-interest and other distracting influences such as families.<sup>36</sup> Economically speaking he desired to get out of them the most possible for the aid of the central government. However he believed that their important function was on the religious side. Herein he admits that many reforms are needed such as an effort to get good bishops, to change the system of appeals and courts, unjust exemptions, etc.<sup>37</sup> "In fact," he writes in a letter, "the King must be obeyed, by great and small, and he must fill the bishoprics with wisely chosen and capable men."<sup>38</sup> While admitting the importance of learning and of its propagation, he desires to see the monasteries limited in number, as well as other religious houses, because of the fact that there is a loss, probably economic, in having too many of them.<sup>39</sup> So he forbade the establishment of any more without the consent of the king.<sup>40</sup>

In conformity with his plan to get all he could out of the

<sup>35</sup> *Mercure François*, XVI, 527-528.

<sup>36</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 304.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 62-63.

<sup>38</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 181.

<sup>39</sup> Ranke, L. von, *Sämtliche Werke*, Leipzig, 1874, IX, 212. Ranke says that Richelieu diminished the number of monasteries as they were a hindrance to trade or business.

<sup>40</sup> Isambert, XVI, 347.

clergy, especially the upper strata,<sup>41</sup> he tried to obtain as much financial support from them as possible. For example, in 1628, he requested money for the upkeep of the army and navy. By giving some, the clergy would relieve the common people. So they granted three millions of *livres*.<sup>42</sup> He would have liked to exclude them from exemptions of taxes.<sup>43</sup> On other occasions he demanded certain amounts of money from the clergy and they objected. Busy with his European wars he permitted them to hold a council and decide what they would pay and he accepted it, as he had other matters which kept him busy.<sup>44</sup>

As will be shown later, Richelieu opposed the Huguenots not on religious but on political and economic grounds, except that he encouraged their individual economic prosperity. This opposition was just a part of that central theory of state building which he carried out so well, and of which not only the nobles and clergy but the Third Estate was a part.

Richelieu regarded the Third Estate from the same point of view as the nation, and for doing so he has been condemned. One writer says that Richelieu always sacrificed the well being of the population to the grandeur of the nation without thinking that there was no more true and solid grandeur than in the union of these two factors, public prosperity, and national glory. In fact he accused the Cardinal of having no true love of the people. And whereas the latter followed Henry IV in his attempts to build up the state he did not imitate him with respect to the improvement of the welfare of the people, which was one of the aims of his predecessor.<sup>45</sup>

Now it is quite correct\* to say that the Cardinal built up everything for the interest of the state. That was the central part of his political and economic philosophy. He recognized the people as constituting a part of the great nation and consequently they must be aided as a class. He looked at them

<sup>41</sup> Bonnefon, P., *La Société Française du XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, Paris, 1903, 85. Richelieu neglected the lower clergy, probably considering them a part of the Third Estate so far as social standing was concerned. In this he made a mistake.

<sup>42</sup> *Mercurie François*, XIV, 179.

<sup>43</sup> Caillet, 83 et seq.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 87.

<sup>45</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, I, Introduction, CIII, CIV.

from the cold, calculating point of view of the statesman and economist, who believes that you must build up all the parts in order to increase the grandeur of the whole, but care must be taken to have in view constantly the whole rather than to weaken common advancement by an undue emphasis placed upon some part. This was his theory with respect to the relations of the people to the state and even with regard to the relation of individuals to the people as a whole. For example, he says in his *Testament* toward the end of his life that the public interest ought to be the goal of those who govern the state, or at least the mass should be preferred instead of individual people. He cites Spain as an example, as having been made great through emphasis on the people as a whole. "By means of reason and justice this should be the method of councillors and kings of the future."<sup>46</sup> He asks the future government to consider the welfare of its peoples but in doing so he says, "all classes should stay in their proper boundaries, and thus trouble would not arise."<sup>47</sup>

In spite of the fact that Richelieu is considered to have had no personal sympathy with the people, but instead appeared to base all his ideas upon problems concerning the welfare of the state; nevertheless, he did have human sympathy for them. He realized their difficulties and would have liked to solve them. He tried to do so but he knew that the strongest means to obtain aid for the people was through a strong nation. That is why he put the latter doctrine to the front, even though the citizens had to suffer temporary oppressions. It was done with the hope of better conditions for the common people in the future.

Richelieu was a farsighted man. He admitted the sufferings of the people due to the wars, but he saw the benefits to be derived in the future because of them, not only by the king but by the people as a body. "War," he says, "is for the best interests of the people as a whole in that it keeps the state from ruin."<sup>48</sup> In another place he says that the interest of France is the interest of its citizens, and the most important obligation of a king is the

<sup>46</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 267-270.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 181-182.

<sup>48</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXVI, 87.

repose of his subjects and the conservation of the Kingdom.<sup>49</sup> He admitted that war made the people suffer, and he tried to prevent it when possible. However, he also recognized the fact that the average individual could not understand the ultimate benefits to be derived by war and thus was apt to oppose it at inopportune times. "The miseries and afflictions of the people of France," he says about 1630, "who have suffered under very great and almost incredible poverty, made peace a desirable thing, and the king as their king and father was obliged to urge it. The frequent disorders taking place in many towns brought up the fear of a continuation of the war, because of the need of more money to wage it. The people in general, especially merchants, blamed the government for heavy taxes, etc." In conclusion it is interesting to note that he says the king as their father was obliged to seek peace for them.<sup>50</sup>

It is quite evident that there was a strong peace party in France, led by the merchants, who did not like to pay the bills of war. Yet the problem resulting seems to explain why Richelieu did not take active steps to aid the people at this time. In fact he could not. The political and economic status of France as related to other nations had to be settled first before he could attend to the internal economic problems confronting him. He had to develop his foreign commercial policy first and then his internal commercial program. He could only accomplish the latter when the general status of France in the world at large was established. This task occupied the last ten years of his life. Only a beginning could be made with respect to internal affairs, although throughout his administration he was at least sympathetic toward the common man.

One of the most important phases of Richelieu's career is his bishopric of Luçon. The very fact that he was a churchman, and a conscientious one at that, tends to indicate that he must have known about the unhappy conditions of the people. That he did was also shown by letters written during his administration as bishop. In 1608, when he first became bishop, he wrote to the people that "time will show the affection which I bear toward you, more than words can do. It is for that

<sup>49</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXII, 15.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVI, 86-87.

reason that I wait for deeds to let you know that all my attentions are for your welfare.”<sup>51</sup> He follows this up a few days later with a letter to the local tax collector, protesting against the unfair assessment of taxes, bringing out the misery and poverty of the inhabitants from the excessive *tailles*, etc., and he closes with a plea for moderation of the taxes and equalization among the different sections of France.<sup>52</sup> This letter is followed by another the next year (1609) to a high official (probably Sully) asking him to aid the poor by a reduction of their taxes.

When he became secretary of war in 1617, he desired to aid the poor people. Also in 1627, at the assembly of notables he again advocated attention to the welfare of the common people.<sup>54</sup> He said that the greatest thing that a king can do is to protect public faith, as it is an inalienable friend which is always to be found present. He made the assertion that the people who now contribute more of their blood than their sweat to the expenses of the state should be aided. “In proportion as you help the people and better their condition, the more you can obtain from them.”<sup>55</sup> This certainly is a sound economic doctrine and shows that the Cardinal appreciated the fact that improved labor conditions would bring better results.

In 1627 Richelieu was advocating the uplifting of the common people to a surprising extent. One writer states “that he even said, that he was to do it all in six years.”<sup>56</sup> Unfortunately he was not able to carry it out before his death. That he believed in it in theory to the very last was shown in his *Testament*. “This does not excuse him,” says d’Avenel, “why did he not aid them during the period 1627 to 1642?”<sup>57</sup> He did to a certain extent, as will be shown in the chapter on finances. But one must remember that during that time France was involved in a great European war, to preserve her economic and political status as a nation; that she was trying to overcome

<sup>51</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, I, 15.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 18.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 20.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, I, Introduction, CII-CIII.

<sup>55</sup> *Mercurius François*, XII, 790.

<sup>56</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, Introduction, XCII-XCIII.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, CII-CIII.

internal political troubles; that a certain amount of territory and centralization of government was necessary before the finances could be improved; and lastly, that the great Cardinal was hindered by numerous petty plots of individuals which disturbed the nation during the entire period. What chance did he have to fund a debt or attempt any important internal reform?

The center of difficulty in regard to the third estate was of course the heavy taxes. Between 1627 and 1632 he intended to discharge the people from the burden of three millions of *livres* and asked them, in recognition of this desire on the part of the government to aid them, to keep the peace.<sup>58</sup>

The same idea is brought out in his *Testament*. He says that the public welfare should be the only end of those who govern the state. "If private interest is preferred to public good then harm is done. But if the public interest is the first concern, then the state will be happy and escape miseries. The particular interest of the king and the people go hand in hand. We must therefore aid the public and prepare for their preservation."<sup>59</sup> The means to do this was to be the reform of the finances, for he says, "If the finances are properly arranged, the people will love him out of pure personal interest. This affection is very important to a king. It is worth more than gold or silver."<sup>60</sup> In other words a king cannot do much with his money without the love of his people, — a rather business-like way of beginning the problem. And he not only states it but tries to solve it by proposing to reduce the revenues demanded of the people by three-fourths. This will be taken up in a later chapter.<sup>61</sup>

Richelieu has been criticised for his economic conception of the common people. He has brought out this idea in his treatment of the question of the relation between the amount of labor a man should do and his physical strength. "In regard to this problem," he says, "all authorities agree that when the people are too comfortable, or have too easy a time, it is impossible to keep them within the bounds of duty, because they are more

<sup>58</sup> *Mercure François*, XII, 36-40.

<sup>59</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 267-271.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 115-117.

<sup>61</sup> See Chapter V, 73-81.

ignorant than the other classes, and to keep them within the limits of reason and within the law, they must be kept occupied. If discharged from their duties or obligations, they would think themselves released from obedience, like mules used to burdens. But like these animals, their burdens must be moderate. The common people need protection. Common sense must determine the proportion between the burden and the strength of those who bear it. The relation of the loads and the ability of the people must be religiously observed. A prince cannot be esteemed good if he exacts from his subjects more than is necessary. Yet those people are not the best who never raise more than is absolutely necessary."<sup>62</sup> This passage seems to indicate the economic turn of the Cardinal's mind as no other part of his work does. He desired efficiency in France. He wanted her to produce a surplus. His idea was a strong nation built up of healthy, busy people who would work and produce so that France could become a great political and economic power. To bring this about he even went so far as to advocate extra taxation of the rich. For he says, "Sovereigns must, if possible, make use of the abundance of the rich before they bleed the poor."<sup>63</sup> This remark has a socialistic tinge which is rather out of place in the seventeenth century. No, it does not seem fair to say that Richelieu was unsympathetic with the common people. He really tried to aid them not only financially and politically, but commercially as well. Richelieu was a business man and the welfare of France was his business.

The development of the economic side of France was one of the most important phases of his administration, and, indeed, affected the common people by bringing on what might be called a social revolution. "Richelieu," says a writer, "has been, without wishing it, one of the most powerful agents of that economic evolution and social change, which tends little by little to level the ranks and which left to the nobles no other superiority except that of privilege. The commercial man no longer resembled the trader of the past with his simple and rude manners, who busied himself with his cloth, etc. and passed his life in going from town to town with goods on the backs of

<sup>62</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 179-182.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 181-182.

his mules. Now, often raised in his calling to the side of some magistrate's son, he was no longer a merchant but the head of a firm of speculators, who had his departments and his correspondents at Cadiz, London, Frankfort, etc."<sup>64</sup> "Big business" was beginning at that time. Richelieu did all he could to encourage it by allowing the nobles to engage in it without losing their rank and also by creating nobles from those of the third estate who made a success of commerce and permitting them to join the royal court.<sup>65</sup> Efforts were made to reestablish commerce, to renew and amplify its privileges, and to bring it about that the profession of trade should be honored by the people.<sup>66</sup>

As a result of the increase in commerce, class feeling was engendered. It caused trouble between the nobility and the common people, in that the nobles claimed that they were better than the common man even though they engaged in trade. Also, the third estate did not want the privileged class to engage in commerce and protested about it. Lastly, the rise of many middle class people to the ranks of nobility can be noticed as a result of this economic and social change.<sup>67</sup> The middle class began to assume a place of importance so that even Richelieu was forced to try to influence them in his *Mercure François*, the first so-called French newspaper.<sup>68</sup>

In conclusion, Richelieu's attitude toward the King and the Three Estates was that of a mercantilist. The latter were a part of the state of which the King was the father or owner. As his overseer the Cardinal's chief duty was to build up the state, although he was keen enough to see that this really involved the welfare of the people of France. As a result, he had a sincere interest in their betterment,<sup>69</sup> and by his many accomplishments he helped to prepare the way for the social and economic, as well as the political, changes which came later. No better phrase can illustrate the Cardinal's deep and heartfelt

<sup>64</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 456-458.

<sup>65</sup> Isambert, XVI, 527.

<sup>66</sup> *Mercure François*, XII, 36-40.

<sup>67</sup> Levasseur, E, *Histoire du Commerce de la France*, 2 vols., Paris, 1911, I, 259.

<sup>68</sup> Deschamps, 129.

<sup>69</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 180 et seq.



interest in them, than the close of that section of his *Testament* dealing with the third estate, in which he pleads with the king to consider always their interest, and affirms that nothing would give him greater pleasure than to have the king try to carry out, after his death, what he has tried to do when he was on earth; namely, to build up a strong state and a happy people therein.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>70</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 180 et seq.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF RICHELIEU'S POLICY OF CENTRALIZATION

Richelieu, when he came into power in 1624, realized that if he was to make the King supreme and build around him a great state, he had to take steps that would lead to the centralization of all internal political, social, or economic forces, under direct or indirect control of the royal government. "The Huguenots shared the Kingdom with us," he said, "and the nobles conducted themselves as if they were not subjects of the King, and the most powerful governors of the provinces as if they had been sovereigns of the Kingdom."<sup>1</sup> All this, he claimed, diminished the authority of the King.<sup>2</sup> People looked after their own interests rather than the state, and this neglect on the part of the king's advisers caused great injury to the development of France. To strengthen the power of the Royal House in internal affairs was his first problem. It was the only way to develop the nation. That Richelieu devoted his personal attention to this side of the development, and left Father Joseph to carry on the major part of the political questions of the Thirty Years' War, indicates the importance he placed upon this phase of his administration.

Now to bring about a thorough internal change, he had to remove all troublesome obstacles, which involved naturally the accumulation of power in the hands of the King and his Prime Minister, the destruction of the political independence of the nobles and Huguenots, and the centralization of all local forces under the direct or indirect control of the King and his government, especially the chief Councillor, who was to be a very important officer.

Richelieu has left ample evidence as to the qualifications of a chief minister of the King. He must have in mind constantly his duty to the King and to the state. There should be more

<sup>1</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 6.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 7.

than one councillor to advise the ruler, but one should be above the others.<sup>3</sup> "However," he says, "this man should have public approbation, for if everybody likes him, he will be most able to do good."<sup>4</sup> This minister should be able to advise the King in all the phases of government. Louis XIII understood the vast importance of the Cardinal.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, he even permitted him to have a deliberative voice in the *Parlement* of Paris, just as he had in the council of state.<sup>6</sup> As the king's chief adviser he had access to all the parts of the French government. He was supreme. All was centralized in his hands, subject of course in theory to the final word of his master.

However, it is interesting, and important to notice, that the office upon which Richelieu laid the most emphasis was that of "grand master, chief, and general superintendent of the navigation and commerce of France." The fact that he obtained it during the early part of his administration brings two important points to light, namely, the economic interest of the Cardinal, and the means by which independent nobles, governors, and other powers were removed in the interest of centralization. It was the first great step by which Richelieu could carry out personally his political and economic program.

Bad internal conditions made this necessary. "There existed in France," says one writer, "two institutions incompatible with the unity of ministerial power, as with the order and finance and administration. They were, first, the jurisdiction of the high *connétable* of France and secondly, the office of the admiralty."<sup>7</sup> Both were suppressed. Richelieu in his *Memoirs*, mentions the abuses brought about by Montmorency, the last of the *connétables*. The office and its mate the admiralty, which had as much power on the sea as the former on the land, were suppressed, "because," he said, "they weakened the control of the King and were harmful to the finances, which were the ordinary expense of war, together with that of the local officials of that department."<sup>8</sup> The admiral had, likewise, large sums of money

<sup>3</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 232-240.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 244.

<sup>5</sup> Bonnefon, Introduction, II.

<sup>6</sup> *Mercurie Française*, XIII, 365.

<sup>7</sup> Martin, H., *Histoire de France*, 6 vols., Paris, 1861, II, 244.

<sup>8</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 212-213.

to spend on the navy. The question raised was as to whether or not they expended the money as it should be spent. It was quite evident from the complaints of the soldiers and others that much of it was wasted, and that, as a result, their finances were in bad shape. Naturally, this led to the suppression of those offices in the interest of the state. It happened that in 1627 they were both made vacant by death, so that by abolishing them the people were to be aided by decreased expenditures.<sup>9</sup> This was the view Richelieu desired the people to take. It is interesting to notice how, in carrying out all his great acts, he constantly appealed to the effect upon their purses. He desired to get control of the armies on land and sea, but wanted the people to look upon it as an economical change for their benefit. His aim was not only along financial lines, however. He desired to build up the commerce of France, and this office enabled him to do so without local hindrances.

But just what were its duties? The answer to this question gives a clue to the economic policy of Richelieu. "In the first place," says the edict, "he must treat with all kinds of persons. He must look over propositions of our subjects relating to commerce, decide concerning the merit, utility, etc., of all agreements, articles, contracts, etc., concerning the sea and its enterprises. . . . He is to look after commerce, which is so useful to France. Our navigation rights and sea enterprises are under his charge. All those embarking on sea trips, can now go to him for permission. Before this no one knew to whom to go. All the evils of the marine are to be removed, etc."<sup>10</sup> The Cardinal was to have full charge of navigation, the advancement of commerce, and the security of Frenchmen on the seas, in times of peace. In times of war, other offices might be created.<sup>11</sup> The importance of this office can only be appreciated when one realizes that it put the control of commerce fully in the hands of Richelieu, and indicated that this part of his administration was to be one of the dominating factors of his career. Trade was to be fostered by it for the honor and grandeur of the state and the profit and increase of public wealth.<sup>12</sup> It was

<sup>9</sup> *Mercure François*, XIII, 354-358.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 361-362.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 362-364.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 359-360; XIV, 4-46.

clearly a part of his centralization policy. Indeed, says one writer, "Richelieu took the control of the maritime provinces away from local governors, and concentrated it in his hands, in order that it should grow at an astonishing rate."<sup>13</sup> He realized that centralization in time of need meant efficiency and quick results. This is what he wanted on the economic side of his administration. The office, really that of secretary of commerce, marks the first great step taken in the economic development of France, and it is an evidence of Richelieu's unselfish motives that the first abuses which he remedied were those by which he might have profited. He would take no pay for his duties in this office, nor would he take a share in the salvage.<sup>14</sup> Yet he had enough economic shrewdness to know that he would benefit financially by other means, of a more quiet nature.

However, this mercantilistic policy of centralization, which the Cardinal used as the dominant keynote of his administration, is to be found also elsewhere than in the changes in the royal government. The unity of the King and the common people against the nobles is a feature which plays a part in this program. The idea was not original with him, for one can see its beginnings in the early Capetian days, and again in the reign of Louis XI, "whose sole aim was to constitute the French nation by removing the incubus, without whose removal its existence was impossible, namely, feudal aristocracy. Thoroughly devoted to looking on the frivolous etiquette of the nobles with undisguised scorn, assuming the dress and society of commoners, Louis XI was the true precursor of Richelieu."<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, little was accomplished in the way of reducing the power of the nobles until Richelieu's time.

When he undertook the administration of France, he saw the nobles still at their attempts to strengthen feudalism by means of various internal and external conspiracies. He feared a combination of troubles. "What would happen if the nobles or Huguenots united with Spain?" he asked. It is quite evident that he saw the economic as well as the political and religious consequences. For a Spanish victory might and probably would

<sup>13</sup> Gouraud, C., 193-244.

<sup>14</sup> Martin, II, 244.

<sup>15</sup> Bridges, 16-25.

have meant not only the supremacy of the nobles, but it would have permitted the Spanish Catholic nation to overrun France, thus preventing the political and religious equilibrium which the Cardinal hoped to establish in Europe as a necessary prerequisite for his future plans of making France a great economic as well as a political state.<sup>16</sup>

Consequently Richelieu decided that he had to weaken or destroy the political power of the nobles. The destruction of most of their fortresses and castles unnecessary to the defense of the kingdom was the most important step taken to attain this desire.<sup>17</sup> It was brought about with the express purpose of eliminating needless expense, of preventing trouble, and of delivering the people from the inconvenience, both economic and political, which they had suffered from the existence of the local quasi-independent powers.<sup>18</sup> As a result, it made the nobles, the courtiers, and the common people more independent citizens. They could trade with more freedom, and France received a direct economic stimulus through this act. It cut down the expenses of government and made for peace and tranquillity in the land. Therefore, it was a very important economic measure. With the same purpose in mind the Cardinal prohibited the carrying of weapons except by permission.<sup>19</sup> Also, he brought about the edict against duels, on the ground that it was best for the conservation and growth of the state. He said that the general welfare of the people was ahead of the interests of particular individuals.<sup>20</sup> In other words, he did all that he could to better social and economic conditions in France for all the people, by depriving certain classes of rights unjustly claimed. This was done with the express purpose of making France grow.

Richelieu did not succeed in his attempts to reform social conditions. The blight of war prevented the fulfillment of this phase of the development of France. Nevertheless, he had initiated a social reform, and was, therefore, in so far, a forerunner of the French Revolution. He left the nobles mere courtiers, and the French Revolution deprived them of all their privileges.

<sup>16</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 82-84.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 320. Carillet, 124.

<sup>18</sup> Isambert, XVI, 192-194.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI, 175; *Mercure François*, XIII, 399-400.

<sup>20</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 294-297.

Richelieu desired the nobles to earn their exemptions. They failed to respond, and this caused their fall.

The Cardinal was not radical in his changes. His was a conservative type of mind. In his reform of the government, in his replacement of officials and removals of nobles in office, he was very slow and exact in the steps he took. "The disorders," he says, "which have been established by public necessities and strengthened by reasons of state, cannot be reformed without time. Changes must be accomplished by degrees without passing from one extreme into another." He then admits that care must be taken in the removal of officials. Efforts must be made to keep them within the bounds of their duty, for the public welfare.<sup>21</sup> Richelieu was willing to give in to some nobles or provinces in various proportions, if he saw that it was for the interest of the state to do so. Numerous examples can be given, as where he refused to abolish certain taxes because all the provinces would not agree to it,<sup>22</sup> and where he exiled the ruler or governor of Rouen and later allowed him to return.<sup>23</sup> "*Les messieurs de Saint-Malo*" refused to permit the King to construct some vessels in their port. The Cardinal showed them that it was for their interest in the protection of their commerce to do so, and promised in return to increase their franchises.<sup>24</sup> Richelieu added to or took away the privileges of individuals, with the sole purpose of public welfare as he saw it.<sup>25</sup>

No better indication that Richelieu wanted to be considered the benefactor of the people can be found than in the dispute over the Cardinal's administration between Richelieu and Gaston, brother of the King. The latter accused the Cardinal of working for his own ends and causing the great misery of the people. In reply Richelieu said that the unfortunate state of the people hurt him. However, he pointed out the fact, that it was largely due to the uprisings caused by Gaston and others, which had retarded him in his efforts to aid them.<sup>26</sup> Richelieu

<sup>21</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 159.

<sup>22</sup> Montchrétien, Introduction, XC.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, XC.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, XC.

<sup>25</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, II, 217-218; *Lettres*, IV, 200-201; *Mercur* François, XII, 325-326; XIV, 70-139; 156-160; Isambert, XVI, 339.

<sup>26</sup> *Mercur* François, XVII, 264.

constantly asserted that as soon as the political disturbance inside France should be put down and Spain be defeated on the outside, he would turn his attention toward the aid of the people, "which I so much desire."<sup>27</sup> "The King," he says, "has no other aim than the grandeur and welfare of the Kingdom."

Another way by which Richelieu weakened the nobles and aided the people was in the appointment of intendants. These newly created government officials were charged with the management of financial and judicial affairs in the local provinces, but were responsible to the central government. This power had been in the hands of various nobles, who had used their authority for their own personal financial benefit, so that the appointment of these new officials had a distinct economic aspect.<sup>28</sup>

The reduction of the power of the *Parlements*, especially that of Paris, has an economic interest besides its part in the general centralization idea of Richelieu. He desired them to attend to their judicial affairs, and leave the government alone.<sup>29</sup> He did not ask either the Estates General or the *Parlements* to aid him in getting control of the nobility, because both of these bodies supported the party he struggled against, namely, the great landowners.<sup>30</sup> Therefore, the destruction of the political power of the *Parlements* as well as that of the nobles was necessary for the centralization of the government, and the aid of the people. According to Richelieu's scheme France was not to have a government of the poor by the rich. It was to be a government by a central hereditary monarchy over both classes. "In other words," says one writer, "feudalism in the hands of Richelieu was concentrated into a single institution, hereditary monarchy."<sup>31</sup> By this he hoped to do away with most internal and external evils and build up a strong state. No wonder he put down all conspiracies so severely. Indeed, his effort to end the disorders of the court of justice, by having the King appoint men of merit and integrity,<sup>32</sup> only serves to illustrate

<sup>27</sup> *Mercure François*, XVII, 130-133, 192-194; Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 8; Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XI, 349-350.

<sup>28</sup> For further information concerning the Intendants, see Chapter V, 84 et seq.

<sup>29</sup> Molé, *Mémoires*, 4 vols. Paris, 1855, I, 478-482; II, 3.

<sup>30</sup> Bridges, 30-31.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 31.

<sup>32</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 168.



the fact that he tried, in theory at least, to reform all the parts of the royal and local governments, in order to build up a strongly centralized kingdom in which the people should enjoy a happier social and economic life. Practically, Richelieu was apt to favor certain classes in his appointments, as when for example he made the Archbishop of Bordeaux admiral of one of his fleets. The latter was not especially efficient in this new calling. In 1641 the fleet was defeated by a Spanish squadron near Tarragona, and Richelieu admitted that he had made a mistake by removing the Archbishop from command.<sup>33</sup>

There was one political element in France which attracted the attention of Richelieu more than any other single factor, on account of its independence and opposition to the interests of the state. It was the organization of the Huguenots. In his Political Testament he says that at the beginning of his administration, he promised the King to employ all his industry and all the authority given him, to rule the Huguenots, etc.<sup>34</sup> Their control constituted one of his first problems in carrying out his great scheme of centralization. "It is certain," he said, "that the downfall of La Rochelle, (politically speaking), is the end of the miseries of France and the beginning of its repose and good fortune."<sup>35</sup> It was the idea of attaining a future peace and the development of France thereby, which caused Richelieu to take a severe attitude toward these people from the start. "As long as the Huguenots have a foothold in France," he writes, "the King will never rule within and can take no glorious action within or without."<sup>36</sup> The destruction of their political power was a necessary preliminary to the welfare of the ideal centralized state.<sup>37</sup>

Nevertheless, in bringing about this change the Cardinal did not desire to injure the Huguenots personally. "If they stay quiet," he said, "they will be treated as citizens, with the due protection of laws, etc."<sup>38</sup> They had a place and value as

<sup>33</sup> Perkins, J. B., *Richelieu and the Growth of French Power*, New York, 1904, 179.

<sup>34</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 8-9.

<sup>35</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 161.

<sup>36</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXII, 430.

<sup>37</sup> As Bishop of Lucon, Richelieu lived near the Huguenots and thus was well aware of their religious, political, and economic power.

<sup>38</sup> Isambert, XVI, 143.

Frenchmen, and he recognized that fact. One writer suggests that he rather favored those Huguenots who devoted themselves to agriculture, industry, and commerce. "He opened to their enterprise all the French colonies except Canada."<sup>39</sup> The Cardinal appreciated their economic importance as individuals, but depreciated their political strength as a body. To preserve the former and ruin the latter was necessary in order to develop France along either political or economic lines. "There is no King, Prince, sovereign, nor any state so well governed that it approves a rebellion of its subjects; for an uprising would be fatal to the existence of the state."<sup>40</sup> And Richelieu means not only the political but the economic state as well. The Huguenots could not remain either politically or economically independent.

In 1615 Montchrétien's treatise on economics placed great emphasis on the value of the salt industry in France. "I would remark to your majesty," he says, "that all the trade, not only of Frenchmen but of foreigners, depends upon the salt of the Kingdom." Salt can be a great source of revenue for France, he points out, as it is a public necessity for all. In fact the English, Dutch, Italians, etc., should pay the same revenues as the French (which evidently had not been the case previously).<sup>41</sup> In another place, he advocates the transfer of salt to other parts of France by Frenchmen, instead of foreigners, as had been the case.<sup>42</sup> It would seem that Montchrétien was well aware of the economic importance of the French salt resources. Also, one can see in the above citations another indication of Richelieu's fostering care for the development of French labor and transportation.

It is interesting to note that at the time when Montchrétien was advocating retaliation against foreign countries which injured French commerce, England resented this attitude (as will be shown later), and thus was brought about an industrial monetary crisis in France.<sup>43</sup> Hard times helped to bring on the revolt of the Huguenots, who were becoming more and more addicted to the pursuits of trade and industry, and also led to the

<sup>39</sup> Rambaud, I, 572.

<sup>40</sup> *Mercurie François*, XIV, 104.

<sup>41</sup> Montchrétien, 235-236.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 185-186.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 129-130, Editor's note.

uprisings of the nobles who sought to profit by popular discontent, and recover their lost prestige.<sup>44</sup> Thus a commercial rivalry between England and France, and a political and economic struggle between France and the Huguenots developed into a three-cornered fight, with the English in alliance with the Huguenots, who in turn were aided by many ambitious nobles.

The struggle centered around the capture of the islands of Oléron and Ré, which of course would result in the fall of La Rochelle. Richelieu said, that the island of Oléron was of great importance in that it controlled the outlet of the Clarente and the Sendre rivers, and could be of inconvenience to the traffic of the Garonne river, and thus injure the King's taxes and commerce.<sup>45</sup> It thus becomes clear that Richelieu had a commercial motive for the conquest of those islands. He desired the advantages obtained from their wines, wheat, and salt.

Of course Richelieu's views were bitterly opposed by the people of La Rochelle. The Huguenots claimed that the French had constantly tried to hinder the commerce of that place, by which it existed. In reply, the King and Richelieu accused the people of La Rochelle of doing injury to the commerce of other towns, as Orleans for example. "They do not keep their promises," the King said.<sup>46</sup> He told them on another occasion that the commercial growth of La Rochelle made them try to imitate the *Parlement* of Paris and oppose the government. "Now the word is given by their master and it is to be enacted according to his pleasure. Otherwise, it is contrary to the laws of his subjects, the divine law and other rights of the people."<sup>47</sup> In other words, the commercial as well as the political laws of the central government were to dominate over any province or town. Any special commercial privileges of La Rochelle were subject to the will of this central body.

It is certainly interesting to note that the Huguenots claimed that they revolted to get commercial rights. They bemoaned the unfairness of France in attacking La Rochelle, confiscating its goods, and forcing it to seek English aid. In reply, the royal government has the following to say: "O unfortunate fort so

<sup>44</sup> Montchrétien, 129-130.

<sup>45</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 343-344.

<sup>46</sup> *Mercure François*, XIV, 94.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV, 90-94.

fatal to France, O infidelity, so dearly purchased. Since in your substance is found the force of our misfortune, your ruin will be the true remedy. Who will believe the fact, that they were capable of hazarding the honor of France and the loss of the islands and the fort of Ré, and our liberty thereby.”<sup>48</sup> It is clear that the French feared above all the conquest of this territory by the English.

At this point it may be observed that the economic basis of Richelieu's desire to put down internal rebellion was probably partly due to this loss of revenue, which must have been largely responsible for the unfortunate financial condition of France.<sup>49</sup> Furthermore, “the activity of commerce, which renders the Kingdom flourishing, would be interrupted, as a result of the Huguenot trouble,” says the *Mercure François*.<sup>50</sup> It is evident that commercial gain and financial loss were the factors behind the opposition to the Huguenot and English control in France.

On the other hand, the Huguenots pointed out the fact that a treaty of peace had been made between England and France with their aid. But they had found little to warrant their carrying out the articles of that treaty. They had been promised free disposition of salt, which they possessed on the islands, and of their other products, yet all the salt on the island of Ré had been taken away from them since the treaty. By the same agreement liberty of commerce was promised, the retention of privileges, and the reestablishment of the island of Ré as a retreat for the naval forces, but none of these had been carried out.<sup>51</sup> In fact the Huguenots were emphatic in their claims that economic injustice caused them to revolt. Later on, in 1627, they asked why commerce was hindered. They hinted that something must be behind it all. A plain exposition of the importance of trade and the production and distribution of salt was given and they declared that England wanted the islands.<sup>52</sup> The government in reply claimed that the Huguenots had fostered the

<sup>48</sup> *Mercure François*, XIV, 102.

<sup>49</sup> d'Avenel, G. de, Richelieu, *Monarchie Absolue*, 4 vols., Paris, 1859, II, 275; *Mercure François*, XIV, 102.

<sup>50</sup> *Mercure François*, XIV, 102.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV, 89-90.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV, 100-103.

English alliance and that the commercial complaint was a mere false mask, and accused the Huguenots of starting the whole trouble. The central authorities failed to explain, however, why the Huguenots should have so acted.

The personal element was brought into the controversy because there was at least one individual who believed that Richelieu had personal motives in his capture of La Rochelle. "For," says Gaston d'Orleans, the bitter royal opponent of the Cardinal, "by his control of that place he could monopolise the salt sent to England and France as a whole."<sup>53</sup> (Evidently the importance of the salt trade as applied to La Rochelle justified the ardent efforts of all parties to retain control of it.) Indeed, Gaston claims that if Richelieu should fortify properly the islands around La Rochelle, he could render France tributary for the salt trade, and possess the principal revenue of the kingdom.

Viewed in retrospect the Huguenot affair was one of the steps in Richelieu's efforts to centralize all the trade of France. His assuming the office of superintendent and grand master of commerce and navigation was another. However, the important deduction from it all is that the British, the French, and the Huguenots all desired the control of the salt supply, which, being near La Rochelle, became the logical economic bone of contention for all parties. As a matter of fact, one finds that in 1629, Richelieu was appointed Lieutenant General of the islands of Ré and Oléron and several other places.<sup>54</sup> He actually controlled Oléron, and perhaps Gaston was not wholly in the wrong. At least one can be assured that the Cardinal realized the importance of that region, though to what extent he was influenced by patriotic or personal reasons is a question which is difficult to settle. It seems quite clear, however, that the Huguenot affair was not simply a political, but also an economic problem. In the second place, it is evident that Richelieu brought about not only political, but economic centralization in his handling of the Huguenot situation. In keeping with his mercantilistic policy he did not desire either political or economic decentralization within France.

In his efforts to create an efficient and centralized economic

<sup>53</sup> *Mercurie François*, XVII, 216-218.

<sup>54</sup> *Molé*, II, 2.

state Richelieu had certain ideas as to the kind of man he desired for the King's household and other official positions. He desired the positions to be filled from the nobility, yet every individual appointed to office in the King's household should be qualified for his place.<sup>55</sup> While he believed the class system was best for France, yet even here he considered the interests of the common people. For by limiting these positions to the nobility he would leave more people liable to taxes and in that respect would aid the people. He then openly advised the King to appoint men on the merit system, and not sell the offices. "Thus virtue will be the reward for office, not money."<sup>56</sup> He even outlined the requirements as to what constitutes a good councilor.<sup>57</sup> Above all he must be faithful to God and the state. He can attend to his own business and the state's also, but in a conflict of interests, the welfare of the nation comes first.<sup>58</sup> Indeed, when Richelieu says that a minister must be chosen according to his capacity, and his reward as a faithful public servant is that of fame which is the greatest, he seems like some of our modern idealists with socialistic impulses. In fact "state socialism" seems to be an underlying premise. A happy state, a happy people would make a great King and a magnificent France; this sums up his philosophy.

Fame should not be the only reward of a minister of the King's household. "He should be given enough to live on in comfort and be able to labor for the grandeur and benefit of the kingdom."<sup>59</sup> If a man has the honesty, ability, and foresight to merit a governmental position of this sort and to work for the welfare of the state, the government should provide for his economic existence. Richelieu has a practical way of examining political matters, which indicates that he saw their economic importance as well as their political or social value.

<sup>55</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 207.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 208-216.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 217-218.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 225-226.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 195-196. D'Avenel has pointed out that the officers of the King's household, as *chambellan*, *grand écuyer*, and *grand maître* of the King, were charged with various domestic duties of the royal house, but had no political functions. Richelieu evidently wanted to make these officials of more political and economic value to the state. See d'Avenel, *Monarchie Absolue*, I, 55.

Good officials were necessary to build up a strong state not only politically, but economically as well. "A person's interest is not to be compared with that of the public welfare."<sup>60</sup>

It seems that this idea of obtaining men for office by the merit system is entirely in harmony with the mercantilistic conception of the strong state. Richlieu admits this, when he claims that one of the greatest advantages that can be procured for a state, is to give everyone a position suitable to his genius and capacity.<sup>61</sup> A man who is capable of serving the public in certain functions may ruin it in others. What would have been the history of France, if Richelieu had been able to carry out these views? They were conclusions reached as a result of his years of work for the nation, and which he desired to be carried out by those who followed him. Failure to do so, was one of the contributing factors in the events which followed in French history. What a difference it would have made if this advice had been followed,— "Princes must be careful of their given promises. A Prince does harm to appoint a friend to a position for which he is incompetent. A personal friendship should not come before the interests of the state."<sup>62</sup>

However, when one examines his administration as a whole, it will be seen that the Cardinal did not carry out his ideas to the letter. He knew that to change a custom takes time. Therefore, in such matters as the sale of offices versus the merit system, he admits at the last that a man must submit to certain weak conditions, and prefer a moderate regulation to a more austere settlement, which would probably not be so successful. "He who brings justice in by the lump, may sell it at retail, but on the other hand, a man who buys an office may conduct it aright, so as not to lose what he put into it."<sup>63</sup> He believed in not rushing into radical changes. He admits that he would be more popular with the common people if he advocated the suppression of the sale of offices. However, he believed that the welfare of the state is best maintained as it is now.<sup>64</sup> The nation was not strong enough as yet to bring about the required change,

<sup>60</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 282.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 296.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 299-301.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 156-158.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 163-165.

which could better take place at a later time, while bad effects might result if he abolished it at this time. Evidently he judged all changes on the basis of the present and future welfare of the state. Again he said repeatedly that merit should rule the Prince and his appointments, but admitted that he had not followed out this idea. "The reason for it," he says, "is due to the fact that while disorders were in vogue, without any possibility of a remedy, reason required that order should be extracted out of the troubles. This was my intention in preserving or keeping in offices in my care people whom I could oblige to follow strictly my intentions and plans. If it had been possible during the troubles of a reign agitated by different storms to settle the regulation I propose, I would have been a very religious observer of it."<sup>65</sup> Richelieu believed that an idea in theory and in practice becomes two different things, which can both exist only if the welfare of the state permits. In the case of the merit system, however, he did hope to see it succeed in the end.

Before he could carry out many of his plans along these lines, he had to restore peace in France. He hoped to do so by means of a large army centralized in the hands of the royal government. "For," he says, "a Prince must be powerful by the strength of his frontiers and the strength of his army. The welfare and the repose of the state depend on the fidelity and repose of its defenders."<sup>66</sup> The army was another means by which France was to be made ready for the great economic change which would take place when peace arrived. Alas, the great Cardinal had departed before that eventful day occurred.

It is interesting to notice, however, that in spite of the many distractions of war, Richelieu tried to use the centralistic policies of the government to bring about great social improvements. For example, "*lettres patent*" were granted a certain individual who offered to aid in the foundation of an institution for the incurable. "There are," said the edict, "many hospitals and monasteries for curable troubles." Therefore, the government considered such an institution needed for the welfare of its people and allowed its establishment according to fixed rules.

<sup>65</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 188-191.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 1-3; Isambert, XVI, 386.



It was to be exempt from taxes, and to be favored in all ways by the government.<sup>67</sup> The letter, published in 1637, shows that the government was interested in and fostered all schemes which could be of benefit to the general public welfare. It even went so far as to investigate the hospitals and their bad administration, which prevented the poor from being received. This evil was to be remedied; the Mayors and Bishops were to look after their interests. The poor were to be aided by new laws; public employment was to be provided. "By not working," Richelieu said, "they deprive the public of the services which it could receive by their labor."<sup>68</sup> This statement indicates solicitude for the interests of the poor and the state as well, rather surprising but entirely in harmony with the general plan of government. He seemed to be interested also in the physical welfare of the people. The establishment of a Royal Garden at Paris for the culture of medicinal plants, would indicate a general governmental plan to preserve and conserve the health of the people and thus make France strong. For the government knew that the health of man is the most desired and precious of things. "To aid the universities in their research along this line and to help the people in their collection of medical plants, we desire to establish this garden, etc."<sup>69</sup>

All this formed part of the one political, economic, and social conception of Richelieu, namely, to build up a great state along these lines. To reduce the nobles, to put down the political and economic power of the Huguenots, and to unify and make efficient the governmental organization as a whole were elements of one scheme which was essentially centralistic not only on the political, but also on the economic side. He was successful in his efforts to attain this program. Yet his financial policy is generally considered his one great failure. Thus it merits consideration.

<sup>67</sup> Isambert, XVI, 474-477.

<sup>68</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 180.

<sup>69</sup> Isambert, XVI, 161-162.

## CHAPTER V

### RICHELIEU, AND THE FINANCIAL ADMINISTRATION OF FRANCE

The financial phase of Richelieu's administration is a very difficult subject to treat. It has been, in itself, fairly well developed in financial works dealing with the time. But as a part of a general economic scheme, the weak phases of his activities in this line take on a new meaning, and thus require consideration from a new point of view.

In the light of a broader interpretation of the elements entering into the financial administration, it does not seem possible to accept the common conception of this part of the great Cardinal's work. That the weakest phase of Richelieu's ministry was his administration of the finances, is probably true; but considering all conditions involved, one cannot say it was a failure. The accusation that he made no effort to relieve the burdens of the people, or that he failed completely in his efforts to reform the abuses of the financial administration is false.<sup>1</sup> It is an unjust interpretation of the man's career, and necessitates a vindication, although, in one sense, other writers have attended to this more or less successfully.<sup>2</sup>

Richelieu in developing the financial side of his administration was guided by his one general purpose, namely, to build the great state, of which the financial system was a necessary part. But it could be improved only in times of peace and thus appears the real explanation for what failures there were in the Cardinal's policy, — namely, a long period of war which was likewise a necessity in the preliminary development of the great state. Richelieu realized that he could carry out a general financial reform only in times of peace. He points out in his *Testament Politique* that he ruined the Huguenots, put down the

<sup>1</sup> Lodge, R., *Richelieu*, London, 1896, 174.

<sup>2</sup> Caillet, 254, etc.

nobles, and undertook a great war against powerful external enemies, in order to assure a good peace and repose for the future.<sup>3</sup> Why? He goes on to say that the tolerance of these abuses has prevented any attempts to attain his aims, of which the reform of the finances is one. The Cardinal's main interest during his administration was in carrying out the duties of "superintendent of navigation and commerce, etc." As a result he intrusted the principal care of the finances to the superintendent of finances. Yet he gave attention to financial matters throughout his life, and left, in his *Testament Politique*, a clear and concise solution of the whole problem, to be applied later.

This subject will be treated in two parts, first the achievements and problems of Richelieu and his financial superintendents during his administration, and secondly, the general theoretical solution of the problems as expounded by the Cardinal in his last great work. In considering his achievements or intentions, one must bear constantly in mind the main purpose behind all his ideas, namely the grandeur of the state and the elements entering into the attainment of that ideal.

It was in 1615 that Richelieu first took an active public interest in the finances of the country. He spoke then as a representative of the clergy against the sale of offices, which increased the burden on the poor people, who were not able to bear much more. "Finances," he said, "are the true nerves of the state and should be administered with economy and with the reduction of expenses, such as pensions, etc."<sup>4</sup> Also he maintained that the number of people who were exempt from paying taxes should be decreased, all in the interest of justice and the welfare of the poor. However, internal dissention prevented any actual accomplishment except the temporary establishment of a chamber of justice to study the question of finances.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, this meeting of the Estates General marks the beginning of the reaction against the heavy taxes and the unfair exemptions of certain classes. The assembly had heard the demands of the third estate for the establishment of a real

<sup>3</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 85.

<sup>4</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, X, 203, 321-322, 340, 358.

<sup>5</sup> "This chamber was created in 1624 and revoked in 1625. So little was done."—Isambert, XVI, 147.

*taille* borne by all owners of "immovable property."<sup>6</sup> From now on this tax was one of the goals of their ambition.

None appreciated better than Richelieu the immense waste of funds which had been going on since the death of Henry IV. Huge amounts had been spent on pensions for various nobles. Indeed he said, that "the economy of Henry IV and what he has left alone has preserved France. But it will not last, and the very fact that the nobles who have obtained most of the money claim that it was given to foreign statesmen, makes an understanding necessary at once."<sup>7</sup>

Richelieu took two steps in 1625 to remedy the situation. He advocated publicity in the disposition of money obtained in taxes, and a reduction of the expenses of the government.<sup>8</sup> To carry out the above purposes he brought about a temporary establishment of the chamber of justice,<sup>9</sup> and the replacement of corrupt officials by honest ones.<sup>10</sup> "A change of officials," he said, "is not a good thing, but there are times when a nation is saved by means of such changes."<sup>11</sup> Richelieu carried out this idea by replacing several financial officials who were connected with various instances of corruption.<sup>12</sup> However, nothing was really accomplished except the stirring up of a little excitement among the nobles, until 1626, when the two inefficient individuals by the names of Champigny and Marillac were replaced by the Marquis d'Effiat, in the office of superintendent of finances. "His administration," said one writer, "can be placed beside that of Sully and Colbert in merit and importance."<sup>13</sup>

The position of superintendent of the finances was, next to that of chancellor, the most important. He had charge not only of the finances but also of all of the internal administration. In fact, next to Richelieu, he took precedence. D'Effiat took full advantage of his powers and showed his ability from the very beginning. The first thing he did was to have the assembly

<sup>6</sup> Richelieu, *Memoirs*, XI, 240-243.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, XI, 240-243.

<sup>8</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 177-179.

<sup>9</sup> See p. 93, note 2.

<sup>10</sup> Molé, I, 337.

<sup>11</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 25-26.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 26, 209-211, 330; *Mémoires*, XXII, 354-356.

<sup>13</sup> Caillet, 268.

of notables called. At this meeting, he presented to the deputies a valuable statement of the financial condition of France. He indicated the lack of funds for everyday expenses. Money had been collected ahead of time<sup>14</sup> and bad management of the finances had been endured ever since the age of Henry IV.<sup>15</sup> Just as Spain had suffered because of heavy war expenditures and no peace, so France was on the verge of ruin because of the state of her treasury. Efforts had been made to aid the finances by selling the domain of the King; by the creation of offices and increase of *taille*, but to no avail. "However, when peace is declared," he said, "the King wants to aid his people, put down the internal disorders, and increase the rights and wages of sovereign companies, etc. This meeting is to offer solutions of the present problem. The King especially desires a decrease of the *tailles* for the benefit of the people, because of their terrible condition. Also, supremacy for France abroad needs good home finances. Expenses and receipts must be made at least to balance."<sup>16</sup> "One of the means," he said, "of bringing this about is to supervise more strictly the amount of money collected and spent."<sup>17</sup> That there was too much chance for "graft" was the keynote of his discourse. He intended to put the finances of France back where they had been in the times of Sully, and the methods used were fundamentally those of the latter.

His remarks indicate the unfortunate financial condition and the problems confronting d'Effiat if he was to improve them. However, the great expenditures brought about by unforeseen external and internal troubles prevented him from accomplishing much, except to keep down the public debt, which was a great work in itself. For example, one way by which he diminished the expenses of the government was by reducing the interest rate on money advanced to the government from 16 or 20 per cent to 10 per cent.<sup>18</sup> Strict economy and increased credit would have worked wonders in spite of the ever-existing disturbances.

<sup>14</sup> *Mercure François*, XII, 804.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 790-794.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 802-809.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 794.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV, 589-590.

Richelieu also delivered a speech to the assembly of notables, in which he tried to justify the heavy expenditures made so far in his administration. "Everyone knows that in matters of state real results are not often achieved at little expense. The great numbers of soldiers necessary inside and outside of France explain it clearly and so we cannot doubt the necessity. The integrity of the administration guarantees the honesty of the expenditures; and the oppression of the outside powers and internal rebellions threatening the ruin of the Kingdom, explain their need.<sup>19</sup> He tried to point out that the great expenditures were for the welfare and future grandeur of France, and so far as he went he was right. In advocating a state of preparedness in the future for the preservation of France,<sup>20</sup> he strikes a chord which is more or less modern. In fact Richelieu here justified his administration, and of course it was for the superintendent of finance to obtain the money in the best way available, even though the people had to suffer as a consequence.

The Cardinal became so infatuated with his external plans of building up a great commerce, a large navy, and making France strong by means of a great army, to be used against her ever-present enemies, that he seemed to have forgotten all his financial schemes for improvements. Of course the death of d'Effiat in 1632, followed by the appointment of two weak superintendents, both theoretically working at the same task, accounts for the weakness of the financial policy to a certain extent. Richelieu realized that in the death of his great financial minister d'Effiat he had suffered an immense loss, and both he and the King were greatly affected by his death.<sup>21</sup> Yet he should have done better in replacing him. The two men, Bouthilier and Bullion, who divided the duties of this office, were not strong men. This contributed largely to the unfortunate financial condition of France in 1642, which will be taken up later. Furthermore, from 1632 to 1642 was the period in which Richelieu was engaged in the important diplomatic, economic, and military activities of the Thirty Years' War. Expenses, on this account, together with part of the former costs of the large

<sup>19</sup> *Mercure François*, XII, 756-760.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 760-761.

<sup>21</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, IV, 337.

marine, were contributing factors toward the unfortunate financial condition of France at his death.

Richelieu constantly harped on the need of great armies which in turn explained why the expenditures were so heavy. At one time he cited the success of the armies in France as an explanation of the bad finances, and promised a future reform. Quoting from the philosophers the saying, "that which is first in intention is the last in execution," he promised reforms in the name of the King, for the people, (1) by the decrease of the *tailles*, (2) by revoking undue exemption privileges, (3) by abolishing luxury and waste, and (4) by the increase of commerce.<sup>22</sup> This promise is an excellent example of the clear economic viewpoint of the man. He had a definite economic policy even if conditions were such as to prevent him from carrying it to completion.

He even claimed that he had the interests of the people in mind, while confronted with financial problems involved in raising great armies and navies. From the first, he had tried to raise troops in various provinces in order to protect their commerce and ships, and to secure freedom of the sea for them.<sup>23</sup> One must not be too hasty in condemning the man when one considers the independent ideas of the various classes and individuals in France. How to raise money and also respect individual privileges was certainly a problem. For he knew the time was not ripe to do away with all special exemptions.

In 1630 Richelieu used his own personal funds to pay the army in Italy, the government having failed to send him the required amount. He even went so far as to borrow money for the army from individuals.<sup>24</sup> In 1634, he again admitted that war had cost a great deal and was a burden upon the poor, but he affirmed it was a necessity in order to save those men and to build up the nation.<sup>25</sup> He tried to aid the people by decreasing the wages of the troops, who were then the best paid in the world.<sup>26</sup> Towards the last he was so deeply affected by the financial side of affairs that, in a letter to Bouthilier, he said that the

<sup>22</sup> Beaurepaire, Ch. de, *Cahiers des États de Normandie*, 3 vols., Rouen, 1877. III, 205.

<sup>23</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 125.

<sup>24</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 694.

<sup>25</sup> *Mémoires*, XXVIII, 4. *Lettres*, II, 297-298.

<sup>26</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, IV, 523-525.

latter should decide financial matters, but if they were brought before the King Richelieu would give his opinion.<sup>27</sup>

By 1638, the finances were in a very bad shape, as is shown by the fact that Richelieu, in a letter to M. de Bullion, complained of the non-payment of the troops. Money was asked for the marine, the army, fortifications, etc.<sup>28</sup> In fact, Richelieu had finally realized that he was involved in a death struggle, and had concluded that victory was the only salvation for France regardless of monetary consequences. As late as 1641 he wrote in a letter that the King must provide for a great navy even if he has to borrow the money, for power on the sea is necessary.<sup>29</sup> If the Cardinal could have had personal charge of the financial end of things, it might have been different. However, it was a physical impossibility to handle all the affairs at the same time, as an intensive study of the problems involved will prove.<sup>30</sup> Yet he did from the very first try to bring about some constructive financial legislation.

Richelieu displayed a certain amount of economic caution and ability when at the beginning of his administration he urged the need of making the best of conditions. "Since God is the only being who will do something for nothing, in order to arrive at his good ends, it is necessary either to diminish the ordinary expenses or increase our receipts or do both. However, it is impossible to retrench in the necessary costs of the state.<sup>31</sup> To think of such a thing would be a crime. This is why the King prefers the public to his own individual interest, and retrenches on his own household expenses in preference. You can judge the necessity of every other man doing the same thing even when he cuts down on some things involving his own person. Each should aid according to his means, and the small efforts of the poor should have a place with the larger aids of the rich. The most austere rules are and may seem mild, when they have no other end than the public safety and well-being."<sup>32</sup> Could anything be more modern than this statement?

<sup>27</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, IV, 647.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 245-247.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 806-807.

<sup>30</sup> Beaurepaire, III, 1-3.

<sup>31</sup> *Mercure François*, XII, 759-761.

<sup>32</sup> The assembly of notables at the beginning of Richelieu's administra-



Richelieu admits that war is necessary for the good of the state. Therefore it is necessary for all to do their "bit" toward meeting the inevitable heavy expenditures. But many for various reasons failed to respond to similar exhortations; and therein lies the failure of his policy. The nobles and the clergy did not fulfil their part of the bargain, though he had a sublime faith in the patriotic feeling of the upper classes of the people. His belief that educated individuals would all work for the public welfare was a great mistake.<sup>33</sup>

The Cardinal did all he could to carry out this idea by punishing corrupt officials. "No official who looks after only his individual interests should retain office."<sup>34</sup> Yet he was lenient because of the King, who desired his favorites kept in office.<sup>35</sup> Again one sees that the faith of the Cardinal in every man's interest in the state, and his conservative attitude toward violent changes in offices caused him to leave inefficient men in various positions, and resulted unsatisfactorily for the nation.

The most interesting phase of Richelieu's efforts to meet the financial situation in 1626, was his attitude toward the common people. He admitted that in wartime the people contributed not only labor but their blood. Therefore, he advocated making the people contribute only enough to keep them from losing the habit of paying taxes, and they were to be heavily taxed only when foreign enterprises or internal rebellion necessitated extraordinary means, for the welfare of the state.<sup>36</sup> Thus, Richelieu was entirely consistent in obtaining the money of the people as far as possible in times of emergency. He only carried out what he had said in 1626. His great mistake is to be found of course in his attitude toward the exemption of the privileged classes, which he permitted.

tion had succeeded in bringing into the foreground the need of retrenchment in government expenses, of decreasing the *taille*, and making other financial reforms, and lastly of doing away with corrupt officials. People in France realized that these problems had brought about the ruin of Spain, and they wished to avoid similar disasters, in order to save the state. See *Mercurie François*, XII, 774-783.

<sup>33</sup> *Mercurie François*, XII, 760, et seq.

<sup>34</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*. XXII, 256.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, XXII, 345-348, 357.

<sup>36</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 302-303.

In 1630, a special council for the consideration of the finances was formed. The superintendent of course was the head of it, and its reports were usually accepted by the council of state. This change was accomplished through the Cardinal's efforts and indicates his interest in that department. The council, however, not only had charge of the finances but also of matters dealing with the roads, bridges, and other public works. It is interesting to note that Richelieu tried to appoint nobles to positions in the various councils and thus interest them in affairs of state.<sup>37</sup>

But the most interesting and important improvement in the matter of finances, was the development between 1633 and 1637 of the system of Intendants of justice, police, and finances, which was one of the most important accomplishments of Richelieu, because it took away from *Parlement*, the nobles, local governments, etc., all rights to a monopoly of the collection of governmental taxes.<sup>38</sup> The Intendants carried out the decrees and reported to the central governmental councils, and had supervision of all affairs which concerned the taxes and administration of public funds. The main purpose in appointing them was to centralize the administration of finances, in accordance with Richelieu's general plan of centralization. Their appointment aided the people, who in many cases suffered from corrupt local governors and nobles charged with the collection of taxes.<sup>39</sup> It was the special duty of the Intendant to look after the interests of the common people. Generally speaking, they were established in order to bring about local unity in all parts of the administration, namely, the police, justice, and finances, and to see that these were controlled by the central government. Yet Richelieu permitted the Intendants in the performance of their duties, to make certain allowances for the franchises and local liberties of provinces or cities. He did this in order that they should build up commercial industry.<sup>40</sup> The Cardinal desired the supremacy in a political sense of France, but he was willing to grant political or economic privileges to those who would use them for the interest of France, by developing their commercial

<sup>37</sup> Caillet, 23.

<sup>38</sup> Isambert, XVI, 442-450; Caillet, 45-54.

<sup>39</sup> In 1626, careful instructions were laid on the "tax commissioners to avoid corruption."—Isambert, XVI, 165-174.

<sup>40</sup> Montchrétien, XCI.

or industrial resources. Exceptions were valid only when they resulted in increased grandeur for the entire state. In many cases the Intendant really usurped the despotic position of the noble and thus the people did not gain by the change.

Richelieu was conservative in his plans for specific financial reform in that he advocated no general retrenchments on the ground that they would not pay for the reason that the expense of bringing them about would make them failures. For example, he did not put much faith in the selling of so-called "bonds," because the King never received more than a third of their amount, while much time was consumed in examining the securities upon which they were based.<sup>41</sup>

He did favor greater returns by means of increased commerce and a strong marine. "By means of both," he said, "France could make herself more powerful in money than any King of the Christian world." One of the most important ways by which the taxes were to be increased was by means of the *gabelle* on salt, which both the French and foreigners obtained near La Rochelle. No wonder he was so interested in obtaining control of that city.<sup>42</sup> All the provinces of France were to pay this *gabelle*, and any parts exempt before should have their privileges transferred to the collection of the *tailles*. This was not a good tax because it worked a hardship on the common people.

Richelieu also showed a lack of insight in the collection of revenue, namely, in the matter of commerce. Trade was to be stimulated in order to obtain more money for France.<sup>43</sup> The French were to pay slight duties on the export of goods, but a limited number of imports paid duties, light at first but heavy later on. Thus, "while Richelieu obtained more money for taxes, he did not see as Colbert did, that by decreasing the duties instead of increasing them, he would increase the receipts because of the growth of commerce."<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 264. Bonds were sold during the age of Richelieu, with the *tailles*, the *aides*, *gabelles*, and other taxes as security. Very often it was difficult to find out whether a certain tax could be accounted good security, since it might have been spent in advance.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, XXIII, 262.

<sup>43</sup> Isambert, XVI, 514-515.

<sup>44</sup> Deschamps, 138.

Many examples can be found wherein the Cardinal tried to settle conflicts between local provinces and the central government over questions of finance in the interest of both and for the state as a whole.<sup>45</sup> One can obtain a general idea of his fundamental desire in his statement of the financial side of the case to the Province of Brittany. In 1628, he admitted that the wars against the Huguenots, etc., had been costly, but they conserved the state and prevented the English from invading Brittany. To protect them a strong army and navy was necessary and strong forts along the coasts. Thus for their own interest as a part of the state, he asked them for money.<sup>46</sup> But the misery and poverty of the people even at that time was a strong obstacle to extensive gifts of money to the government. The fact that Richelieu had to go many times to the local *Parlements* of the various provinces for money indicates wherefore the terrible financial condition of the poor was bound to come, and it is surprising that it was not worse.

Of course Richelieu came in for his share of personal criticism. Gaston, brother of the king, glad of a chance to injure the Cardinal, accused him of causing this poverty through his personal ambitions and lavish expenditures.<sup>47</sup> In reply, Richelieu frankly admitted that he desired to aggrandize France, but as a good servant he regretted to see the Kingdom afflicted with these passing misfortunes, which would continue if men like Gaston were to have their way.<sup>48</sup>

There was one way in which the central government as a whole took a definite stand. It was in suppressing the corruption of the tax collectors. In 1631, one year before d'Effiat died, it was decided that "no impositions should be raised except in virtue of *letters patent* sent and sealed in regular form, which should be registered by the controller-general of finances. Furthermore, the royal judges were ordered to consult the people on Sundays or Festival days to make clear the causes of the impositions which were proposed, naming the amount of taxes, and obtaining the consent of the majority of the people, etc."<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Mercure François*, XIII, 533-534; XIV, 113-119.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV, 139-140.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, XVII, 255-256.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, XVII, 301.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, XVII, 337-345.

The finances were to be administered according to the amount called for. Officials were to obey the laws, there was to be an absence of "graft" in that they had to report the amount to be collected to the people and get their consent, and also, send in a report concerning the sums obtained to the central government. Local and external conditions prevented this plan from being actually carried out, but it is significant in that it aimed to place the collection of the finances on a more democratic basis than ever before. The fact that the people were to be consulted gives to them an economic and political importance strangely out of place in a true conception of an absolute centralized monarchy, unless one considers the mercantilistic point of view, that they were a part of the state, and thus their interests would tend to influence the strength or weakness of the nation.

In 1634, in an effort to aid the people, the *taille* was cut down by one fourth and they were exempted from the ordinary increase of the burdens for the year 1634. Also, the increased payment made by the people in the past was largely due to the "graft" of the tax collectors. To avoid this, officials were to go into parishes and districts, examine the rolls of the *tailles* of those exempted, and see that each one should bear his just portion, according to his ability or means, etc.<sup>50</sup> This practice would indicate a continued effort to improve the financial condition of France, even at that critical time.

The same edict went on not only to deprive the rich of their "increasing rights" and exemptions, but also, only the hereditary nobles were to retain their privileges. All those ennobled in the last twenty years except twelve associates of the company of New France (notice the indirect importance placed upon colonization by this act) were to lose their privileges. In the future nobles were to be created only for important considerations, etc. Also, no one could be exempt from the *taille* by the simple consent of the inhabitants of the parish, but all were to pay their regular share.<sup>51</sup> None but exemptions of long standing were to be recognized.<sup>52</sup> This would seem to be a very important

<sup>50</sup> Isambert, XVI, 389-391; *Mercure François*, XX, 661-662, 697.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI, 391-406; Beaurepaire, III, 207-212.

<sup>52</sup> Omer Talon, *Memoires*, Petitot 2<sup>e</sup> Serie vols., LX-LXIII, Paris, 1819-1829, LX, 60-63; 84, 123.

edict, even though as one writer says, "It was not well observed."<sup>53</sup> It illustrates the efforts of the government to aid France and its people in obtaining a more just and fair basis for taxation. Even though the edict failed, it is evidence of the efforts of Richelieu to reform the finances in a constructive way, at that critical epoch of French history.

In 1635, another edict was issued to supplement that of 1634. It appears that many rich people had fled to other towns to avoid paying taxes, thus making the burden heavier for the poor. Similar action was to be prevented in the future, by making them liable to taxation in their old home, until they had been three months in the new one.<sup>54</sup> There was indeed a strong tendency on the part of the government to aid the poor, in fact it even went so far in an edict abolishing the *sou* for the registration of deaths, marriages, or births, as to say that "the strong should bear the burdens of the weak."<sup>55</sup>

By 1637, the financial condition of France had become critical. Richelieu, in a letter to the King, warned him against overtaking the border cities, since their security was necessary for that of the state.<sup>56</sup> In 1639, Richelieu on account of the increasing expenses had to cut down the financial aid given Holland.<sup>57</sup> Finally the Cardinal in a letter of 1639 came out directly against the increase of the *gabelle*, against unfair taxation in general, and corruption, as having caused the financial troubles of France. "I know," he says, "that the superintendents will say that they can do nothing, and are obliged to undertake many things which they would condemn another time. I will say that all have given their hearts and lands to the enemy and are condemned at all times."<sup>58</sup> Richelieu, by this letter and others, opposed the policy of the superintendent and the financial council, which caused so much suffering.<sup>59</sup> Yet he added insult to injury by asking for additional money. In fact, the last letters of Richelieu to the superintendent of finances not only requested

<sup>53</sup> Caillet, 265.

<sup>54</sup> Isambert, XVI, 455-457.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI, 460-461.

<sup>56</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, VI, 98; *Mémoires* XXX, 317-318.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 613-614.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 496-497; 500-501. Isambert, XVI, 497-499.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 858-859.

more money, which was needed, but also recommended the passage of a general aid of a "*sou per livre*," which he said the people were willing to endure.<sup>60</sup> He had come to the point where he realized that the people had something to say. He admitted that they were, after all, the deciding factor in the solution of this problem. "The consent of the people in a time like this," he says, "is better than all the force which one can use in any other way."<sup>61</sup> Finances must have been in a critical state.

It was not an entire lack of ability which caused Richelieu to permit the state of the finances which existed at his death. The whole truth of the matter is that he left the financial side of his administration to his capable minister d'Effiat, who died while in the midst of carrying France through very successfully. Then two incapable men took charge of affairs, and Richelieu was just beginning to take an active hand in financial matters, when his own early death prevented the completion of his plan.

A few things may be noticed in his favor. The debt which in 1595 was 300 millions of *livres* had been reduced to 250 millions by Sully, and was only 300 millions at Richelieu's death. Thus, although the Cardinal increased the burdens for his generation by his wars, the coming generation would have had an excellent chance to develop France on the financial side according to the ideas left in his last great work.<sup>62</sup>

Finally, when one considers the new and powerful impulse he gave to maritime and commercial enterprises, and his efforts to favor general prosperity and future welfare, it cannot be said that his own personal financial policy was a failure. In the larger sense of the term it was not. That it was incomplete cannot be denied. Constant references by himself and others, leave no doubt as to his future plans.<sup>63</sup> These as appearing in his *Testament Politique* will be considered next, and will be seen largely to justify his financial administration.

<sup>60</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, VI, 900-901.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, VI, 901-902.

<sup>62</sup> Another evidence of the Cardinal's interest in the finances is found in the budget system which he attempted to introduce. This innovation required a yearly statement of the finances, and would have been very valuable if it had been carried out.

<sup>63</sup> Beaurepaire, II, 175, 176, 177; 188-189, etc.; III, 1-3, 69. Goulas, N., *Mémoires*, 2 vols., Paris, 1879, I, 19-20.

Richelieu has left in his *Testament Politique*, a complete statement of his final ideas with reference to the solution of the financial problems confronting France.<sup>64</sup> That he expected the future generation to carry them out cannot be doubted. Indeed, it is to his credit that in his financial schemes as well as his entire policy, he looked into the future as well as the present. Admitting that the expenses for war were great, he maintained that the conflicts would benefit posterity forever and repay them for the pain and labor undergone.

The graft and corruption connected with the collection of taxes in the past, had filled him with disgust. He had been in favor of sending officials to oversee these collectors and also the nobility, and prevent any oppression of the weak and poor by the strong and rich. However, he shows his caution and farsightedness by indicating the necessity of "going slow" and not overturning the entire system of collection. "The state should see," he said, "that those who serve the nation to the best of their ability should be properly rewarded." To punish the really bad, and reward the faithful, was the true method of his reform. In fact his entire plan for the reform of the financial officials was placed on the solid principles of allowing fewer men to do the work and rewarding them adequately for their efforts. Centralization in the hands of a few men of merit expressed the idea of one who was always looking for the greatest economic, political, and social returns, for every measure along these lines.

One must turn to the second part of Richelieu's *Testament Politique* to appreciate his final ideas concerning the finances of France, and his plans for the future solution of the difficulties arising there. "It shows that he was not a stranger to this important part of his administration," says one writer.<sup>65</sup>

In the first place Richelieu makes clear the power of money in developing the power of the state. "Finances," he says, "are the nerves of the state." In order that a nation may be able to compete with other countries, she must have the financial foundation upon which to build her power. He points out that the

<sup>64</sup> The basis of this discussion is Richelieu's treatment of the finances in his *Testament Politique*, French Edition, II, 80-105. English Edition, II, 105-132. Both II, Ch. IX, Section VII.

<sup>65</sup> Caillet, 260.



foundation must be solid. There is a danger of asking too much of the people, and also of asking too little. A happy medium must be struck. All necessary expenses must be met. However, the less one gets from the people the better. Now to obtain the happy result of the best welfare of the people, strict economy in the use of money must be the motto of the government, which, of course, means a reform in the means of collection of the finances and also in the payment of expenses. He maintains that the financial accounts of France, both receipts and expenses, must be open and above board. "Secrecy is conducive to corruption," he says.

He defends his policy of the suppression of the Huguenots and his attitude toward wars in general on the ground of their necessity in order to obtain a peace which would do away with all other abuses. The finances could not be reformed very much until an internal and external peace should be secured.

He then takes up the matter of internal revenue taxes, as a means of raising revenue. He admits that they bring money, but also realizes that they raise prices, which in turn makes the expense of maintaining soldiers higher, as well as causes worse conditions for workmen. They result in a great loss to individuals, with only a slight gain for the Prince. "The poor landowner will not gain by the levy of such a tax. His land will remain the same in value and its products likewise, and even if they increase in price, the excess of price will cause the market for the products to be limited." Richelieu seems to have a faint conception of a law of supply and demand as affected by price. He goes on to state that there will be not only an increase of revenue tax for the producer, but he will also have to pay more for other goods. Thus he will tend to become self-sufficing as far as possible. Increasing internal revenue taxes raises the price of commodities and decreases their sale. Certainly this is a remarkable economic idea to come from a "Political Statesman" of the 17th century. He even goes so far as to say definitely, that if the taxes are increased, the loss in foreign trade will more than offset the gain. Also, if the internal revenue taxes are increased it will reduce a number of subjects to idleness, and the amount realized will decrease, due to diminished production.

The discourse of the Cardinal is interesting in that it shows

that he was judging his actions on an economic basis. He admits that he deviates from the subject when he undertakes to point out the bad features of the above tax. Yet this deviation is sure evidence that he was of an economic turn of mind, and that most of his activities, whether political, religious, or social, had an element of the economic in them.

Going back to the matter of taxes, he makes the point that there should be an arithmetical proportion between taxes and the necessities of the state. He goes on to explain by saying that no more must be imposed on the people in taxes than is necessary for the subsistence of the Kingdom in its grandeur and glory. Nevertheless, he points out that the King is responsible only to God in his judgment as to the amount of taxes. Yet he must consider the interests of his people in that their love and fidelity are necessary for the subsistence of the state and the preservation of his person. Even though the King was theoretically responsible only to God, yet practically, Richelieu admits here and in many other places that the interests of the people must be considered. "Taxes," he says, "must be in proportion to the wealth of the country, for if this rule is not followed, his subjects will have no funds with which to pay the regular duties which they owe their ruler, or to build up commerce." A reasonable decrease of taxes, especially the *taille*, and a careful use of the money obtained so as to attain the greatest results is advice worthy of a first-class financier. He says also that the interests which look to the future must be even more considered than those of the present, in spite of the arguments of numerous men to the contrary. These statesmanlike words justify to a large extent the administration of Richelieu.

The views of the Cardinal were not so wise with regard to foreign commerce, on the side of imports. He still believed that the principal riches of the country depended upon the ability to sell much and buy little. He forgot that a balance of trade as a whole was the most sure way of stopping all the attempts at home in the direction of production and industry.<sup>66</sup> However, that he did see the value of buying commodities in return to a certain extent, will be shown later.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Caillet, 261.

<sup>67</sup> See Chapter IX, 134.

The Cardinal emphasized the economical use of the money obtained by taxation. He compared the waste of French money with the use of the taxes in Venice. As a promoter of state economy, he advised the removal of the corrupt "*comptons*," to whom the taxes were farmed. This would mean a money saving of a million *livres*. He concludes this particular topic by pointing out that it was an art to be able to know how to collect only the necessary amount and also how to spend just the amount needed. "The inability to do either, is a detriment and injury to the state." It is clear that Richelieu comprehended the importance of these two sides of the financial problem, and that he proceeded to treat it in a practical as well as theoretical way is shown by what follows.

In taking up the method of reforming the finances, he considers first the amount of revenue, then the expense of the government, and lastly, to what degree the people may be eased by changes in the above two phases. No part of the work better illustrates the clear, methodical, logical working of this great statesman's mind.

In the first place, in his detailed analysis of the revenues and expenses of the Kingdom, he points out that the amounts and methods of taxation and expenses in times of war and peace were different. Also he says that the revenues could be 79 millions and the expenses 44 millions of *livres*. Thus over 30 millions could be saved. In this 79 millions the *tailles* amounted to 44 millions, the aids 4 millions, the *gabelles* 19 millions, and other taxes 12 millions. The expenses are interest on bonds, wages, taxes and rights of offices, etc. To increase the taxes, Richelieu wished to raise the salt tax and make everyone pay it. He also wanted the *sou per livre* tax on commodities in France. Likewise, he desired to diminish the *taille* by one fourth. But he strongly recommended the *sou per livre* tax as an aid to the support of the war for the grandeur of the state, although at heart he did not think much of the tax. He goes on to list the expenses that are absolutely necessary, i. e., buildings and fortifications must be built, and as for pensions, while they cannot be abolished, a happy medium ought to be struck, in that they should be reduced about one half. "Pensions," he claimed, "were for those who

were doing something for the state, like serving in the war for example." Now by cutting down the expenses, the *taille* could be decreased, and thus the people would be aided. "This reduction should be the chief end. For the true way to enrich the state is to aid the people and discharge them of their burdens. However, in doing so, we should constantly have in mind the future as well as the present."

Richelieu had resolved also to put an end to the great amount of interest which was paid on bonds, and at the same time to diminish the taxes on the people.<sup>68</sup> He planned to do this by a reduction of the *tailles* to about 22 millions; by a considerable increase of the revenue from salt. (This scheme is especially interesting considering the value he put on this product in 1627 when attacking the Huguenots.) Also, by a suppression of the 30 millions above 44 millions. He furthermore intended to make the salt *gabelle* the important tax and one of the valuable resources of the state, by making the trade in that commodity free to everybody. Thus they would get rid of the numerous officials whose wages absorbed a large share of the money received.

The 30 millions of interest charges, which he desired to eliminate, he planned to reimburse within 7 years. He was well aware of the decrease in the value of the capital which the interest represented and saw the advantage to the government of repurchasing the debt while its value was low. "Then," he says, "the revenues ought to be 57 millions of which the *tailles* furnish 22 millions, aids 4 millions, *gabelles* 19 millions, and all the other forms 12 millions. Laying aside the 17 millions to be put in the exchequer, the balance must be looked upon as considerable. No nation lays up half so much after paying expenses."

He notes that many more individuals are to be made liable to the *tailles*, which will aid the people. The reduction of the number of officials will ease them, in that they will become soldiers, merchants, or laborers. Decrease of the exemptions will discharge the people of more than one half of their *tailles*, it being certain that the richest, who are liable to the greatest taxes, are those who get exempted by means of money. In other words, a general reform of the exemptions and the number of corrupt officials would result in more paying the *tailles* and the burden of the lower classes would be lightened.

<sup>68</sup> Caillet, 262.

Upon what foundation was this entire financial scheme laid? The benefit of the state, and of the people as the strongest factor in the state. "I am sensible," he says, "that it will be urged that it is easy to make such projects, like unto those of Plato's Commonwealth, which though fine in its ideas, is a real chimera. But I dare to affirm that the design is not only so reasonable, but so easy to execute, that if God pleases to grant your majesty a speedy peace and preserve you for the Kingdom, together with your servants, of which I esteem myself one of the meanest, instead of leaving this advice by my *Testament*, I hope to accomplish it myself."

He had indeed an excellent scheme for the financial reform of France. It certainly was a misfortune for the French nation, that he did not live long enough to carry the project to a successful completion. Even though his actual financial administration was somewhat weak, nevertheless this final plan when viewed in connection with his general economic and political policy, justifies, in great measure, his financial policy. The same statement might well be made of his internal administration as a whole.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE ECONOMIC RELATION OF RICHELIEU TO AGRICULTURE, INDUSTRY, AND INTERNAL COMMERCE

When Richelieu received the office of "grand master and chief of commerce and navigation," it was natural that he should be more interested in the external side of the national development. He placed internal affairs in the hands of others. For example, he left the guidance of industry to the secretary of state, Sublet des Noyers, *ordonnateur générale* of the buildings and manufactures of the King.<sup>1</sup> So we see that, although the Cardinal entirely neglected no phase of the administration, yet he did not emphasize this particular aspect of it.

From another point of view, it is clear that this part of the French development would have to wait while Richelieu accomplished great things on the exterior. Only matters of direct importance, in that for example they were concerned with the wars, engaged his attention. To illustrate, the Cardinal constantly tried to curb waste and extravagance in the kingdom. He realized that industry and production in general should be made to aid the nation in carrying its wars to a successful completion. Therefore he asked the *Grand Maréchal*, de Bassompierre, to form a committee to investigate and seek ways to do away with the needless waste and luxuries of the people of France.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, abundance was to be produced in the Kingdom by increased commerce, and the vagabonds, disbanded soldiers, etc., were to be made to work.<sup>3</sup> Thus the Cardinal seems to have attempted a rather efficient conservation scheme,<sup>4</sup> which he carried almost to economic extremes when he advocated trade schools as being far more important to France

<sup>1</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 389-390.

<sup>2</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, I, LXXXV-LXXXVI.

<sup>3</sup> Bassompierre, *Maréchal de Mémoires*, 4 vols. Paris, 1875; III, 435.

<sup>4</sup> *Mercur* François, XX, 704-711; XXIV, 1-2.

than the schools of Liberal Arts.<sup>5</sup> The economic efficiency of the man would be of great benefit to France at the present time.

In the larger sense of the term Richelieu did not fail entirely with regard to internal affairs. "He had too great a desire for the welfare of the public to fail utterly in attempting to continue the internal administration of Henry IV."<sup>6</sup> He followed the same unconscious economic policy with reference to the internal as to the external affairs; namely, the mercantilistic or the great state idea. He desired to centralize industry and commerce, and take away the powers of local nobles over agriculture. Whatever he did was done for the good of France. However, the many local franchises, the heavy wars, etc., all prevented him from accomplishing very much in such matters as agriculture and industry. These phases of his administration were postponed until the future peace, when they were to be settled in the interest of the public welfare. Nevertheless, he did manage to accomplish a little.

With regard to agriculture, the administration of the Cardinal shows a weakness which was, however, but natural when one considers the torn-up condition of the country at this time. Yet efforts were made to drain marshes, and various companies were granted the privilege of doing this work with suitable exemptions.<sup>7</sup> Weakening the power of the nobles and centralizing control in the hands of the government was bound to aid the farmers and give them a better chance to pursue their life's work. "Also," says one writer, "the numerous ordinances which were made relating to the problem of raising and allotting the *taille*, and the matter of the discipline of the soldiers, not only resulted in decreasing the bad finances and developing the army, but also relieved many of the country estates by repressing the selfishness of collectors and the ravages of men of war."<sup>8</sup> All this would have had an important effect on France under different circumstances.

M. Henri Doniol in his *Histoire des classes rurales en France*, has brought up the point that Richelieu's administration, contrary to general belief, did consider the interests of individ-

<sup>5</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 125-134.

<sup>6</sup> Gourand, I, 189.

<sup>7</sup> Isambert, XVI, 500-503, 537.

<sup>8</sup> Caillet, 281.

uals and their freedom and rights. He has cited several extracts from the famous code Michaud of 1629 in support of this point.<sup>9</sup> In the first place, the farmer was relieved from the *entail*. Also, by the destruction of the fortresses of the lords, an additional security was obtained which did much to relieve the hard life of the population.<sup>10</sup> The prospect of peace produced an incentive to work, because of sure profits. Furthermore, laws relating to exportation and importation, involving the decrease of the *taille*, and efforts to make imports more nearly equal to exports, together with the reduction of the rate of interest, all tended to better the condition of the farmers.<sup>11</sup>

There are several other measures in the "*grand ordonnance*" of January, 1629, which indicate the solicitude of the government for the people. Article 206 forbids lords to subject their tenants and inhabitants to *corvées* in their own interest, or to impose on the villages in any way. Article 207 forbids lords to make their tenants patronize their mills or presses on penalty of losing their mills and all other rights. Article 209 forbids the lords to interfere with the collection of taxes and the appointment of collectors.<sup>12</sup> A direct effort was made to deprive the lords of any unlawful control over the peasants, and to permit the latter to make the most of their own few privileges. Of course conditions in France were such that this code was never actually carried out.

But one can see that although very little was done to aid agriculture, yet in an indirect way a path was prepared whereby this part of the economic development of France was to be controlled and influenced by the central power. The farmers at the start were given more individual rights, and what Richelieu would have accomplished if he had lived is of course a matter of conjecture.<sup>13</sup>

Turning to the subject of industry, one can find more evidence

<sup>9</sup> Caillet, 281-282.

<sup>10</sup> Code Michaud, see Isambert, XVI, 225.

<sup>11</sup> Caillet, 282; *Mercure François*, XX, 697.

<sup>12</sup> Isambert, XVI, 225 et seq.; Caillet, 282.

<sup>13</sup> Richelieu diminished the power of the Huguenots and nobles as well and after he had put them in their proper position of subordination to the central authority, he did all he could to encourage commerce. See Rambaud, A., *Histoire de la Civilisation Française*, 2 vols., Paris, 1903, I, 572.



of activity along that line of French development, so far as the government was concerned. Starting with the Estates-General of 1615, efforts were made to open industry to all. "At that time, the *cahiers* of the third estate had demanded that the free exercise of the trades be open to all the poor subjects of the King."<sup>14</sup> Richelieu, however, did not respond to the desire to deprive the so-called corporations of their monopolies. The only exception he made was in the case of colonists who had been in the colonies six years. They could become "masters" when they returned to France. This part of his economic policy was weak.

Many industries were at that time the object of regulations. For instance, the beer industry was under governmental control, and the wine growers and distillers were recognized as engaged in two separate industries. Certain regulations were passed also with respect to the iron industry. The soft and hard varieties of iron were designated to be used for different purposes, and steps were to be taken to develop the mines of France.<sup>15</sup> Such an industry as the manufacture of glass in Picardy received its first impetus under Richelieu.<sup>16</sup>

The manufacture of rugs and tapestry attracted more of the attention of the government. During the administration of Richelieu a man by the name of Pierre du Pont and a partner were given the right to weave and manufacture rugs in gold, silver, silk, etc., for 18 years. They were to accept apprentices, train them, and as a reward for their services were to be ennobled.<sup>17</sup> In other words, the government made special efforts to develop this industry and thus cut down the imports from the East.

The manufacture of silk, an eastern product, was also fostered by Richelieu as well as Henry IV. It increased to a remarkable extent under the former, who realized its importance. Indeed, he believed in making France able to manufacture such things for herself and advocated the development of the cloth industry in pursuit of this policy.<sup>18</sup> The obtaining of luxuries from

<sup>14</sup> Caillet, 275-276.

<sup>15</sup> Isambert, XVI, 183, 191.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI, 198.

<sup>17</sup> Caillet, 278.

<sup>18</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 67-68.

abroad was not to be encouraged; they should be made at home.<sup>19</sup> This belief was a part of the mercantilistic doctrine. "If industry was developed and foreign importations hindered by intelligent laws, France could live on its own manufactures as well as agriculture," said Richelieu.<sup>20</sup>

One means by which the Cardinal hoped to aid industry was the development of technical schools along industrial lines.<sup>21</sup> This was a plan which he was not able to carry out before he died.

It is clear that the interest taken by the government in the development of industry was from the point of view of the welfare of the state as a whole. The state fostered those industries which would compete with foreign manufactures, especially in the East. What little attention industry did receive was on the basis of making France a strong mercantilistic state. The destruction of internal political obstacles had an indirect influence on industry in France. Doubtless this field of Richelieu's administration would have received marked attention after the Cardinal had finished the external part of his program and peace had enabled him to turn his attention to other things. This statement might be applied to the matter of internal commerce as well as industry or agriculture.<sup>22</sup>

"At the beginning of the 17th Century," says one writer, two obstacles opposed the development of interior commerce: (1) the lack of good roads and navigable rivers, (2) legislation which laid heavy duties upon the products of the soil."<sup>23</sup> The first problem was mentioned by the Cardinal in a letter to his superintendent of finances in 1638, in which he brought out the inconvenience suffered by the public, because of the corruption and waste of money on the part of those who were supposed to attend to the paving of the streets of cities like Paris, which were neglected as a consequence.<sup>24</sup> At another time he mentions the plan of joining the ocean and the Mediterranean Sea by means

<sup>19</sup> Beaurepaire, III, 270-277. Indicates the rivalry between France and England in the cloth trade in 1639.

<sup>20</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 64-80.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 126-127.

<sup>22</sup> Gouraud, I, 190.

<sup>23</sup> Caillet, 284.

<sup>24</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, VI, 247.

of the rivers d'Ouche and d'Armacon. "But," he says, "this enterprise was too costly for the times. No person would furnish the money, so it was neglected."<sup>25</sup> He admitted that such schemes must rely on individual efforts as the government was not financially able to carry them out. However, in 1632 a law was passed with the purpose of making the rivers of Vettes, Chartres, Dreux and d'Etampes, etc., navigable.<sup>26</sup> So that evidently Richelieu's interest in this part of his administration obtained some results.

Richelieu tried to carry on the work of Henry IV in developing navigation by means of canals. The famous canal of Braire, begun in 1604, was finished in 1640. The government had tried to pay all the expenses involved in its construction but finally had had to call in the aid of certain individuals to complete the task in return for certain concessions. They were to unite the ocean and the sea by this canal in 4 years or lose the rights connected with it.<sup>27</sup> The owners were to be ennobled and might induce other persons of quality, such as churchmen, nobles, and judges, to contribute toward the undertaking. In return, "considering the services which said Guyon and partner render to the public, if they succeed in an enterprise so useful to Paris and many provinces of the Kingdom we will give to them the title of nobility, etc."<sup>28</sup> In this case the government wished to centralize everything in its hands, but lacking money, permitted private parties to undertake some portions of the work. However, this concession was made with the welfare of the entire state constantly in mind. The economic benefits of canals were evident to all at that time.

Many other attempts were made to develop other canals, but the unfortunate state of the treasury and general political conditions prevented their execution. "However," says one writer, "the system adopted by Richelieu had at least the advantage of not engaging the financial responsibilities of the state, and leaving to the companies who undertook the task, the costs as

<sup>25</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, II, 321.

<sup>26</sup> Isambert, XVI, 369.

<sup>27</sup> Richelieu took a personal interest in the plan for the uniting of the two seas by a canal. See Caillet, 285; also *Mercurie François*, XXIII, 338, etc.

<sup>28</sup> Isambert, XVI, 488-496.

well as the benefits.”<sup>29</sup> In this one respect, Richelieu seems a little in advance of the mercantilistic belief.

With regard to the condition of the roads and bridges during the period of Richelieu’s rule, one writer has taken great pains to prove that the Cardinal centralized their control in the hands of the Intendants. Richelieu made out the budget of bridges and roads, looked over the changes ordered, regulated the *corvées* instead of leaving their control to officials, and was responsible only to the King and his council.<sup>30</sup> This unity of oversight was not long in bearing fruit. Although the roads were far from being as well kept as they were in the 18th century, they passed in the second part of the 17th century for the best and the safest highways in Europe.<sup>31</sup>

The service of transportation tended more and more, like the control of bridges and roads, to be monopolized in the hands of the state. Before Richelieu’s time, the convents, the universities, the Kings, etc., all had their separate postal and parcel post systems. No royal relays or messengers took private business, unless permitted to do so by the chiefs in charge. The transport of goods in wagons was the exception, merchandise being carried as far as possible on the backs of animals and by boat.

Richelieu wanted the government to take charge of this part of French affairs, and to centralize the postal service in its own hands. He continued this development (which had been started by Charles IX) by creating in 1624, the office of director and “*Intendant Générale*” of the posts, and gave it to one of his devoted servants.<sup>32</sup> Also, at this time the royal relays were given the monopoly over the roads they covered. The messengers of the universities were limited to university letters, parcels, etc. In 1625 an edict was issued which established relays on various roads, that is, the government was to rent horses to individuals who were to convoy goods to various places. An effort was made to render the distribution of goods even and fair by preventing the holding back of food, through storing it in boats which were kept in secret places, etc. Warning was given that merchants in the future could not hold up laden boats or keep

<sup>29</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 391-392.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 392-393.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 394.

<sup>32</sup> Levasseur, I, 249.

merchandise in warehouses along the rivers for future use. Such action was fraudulent and to the prejudice of the public.<sup>33</sup> Thus efforts were made to prevent speculation in food and merchandise, in a manner very similar to the present. One sees that the government of that time did not fail to regulate any industry or organization if it saw fit, when the latter tried to interfere with the public welfare. Finally, all goods except grains, wines, etc., were to be transported by royal carriers, so that the form of a monopoly was at last reached.<sup>34</sup> However, this privilege of government monopoly of the post and express was never enforced, and the traders remained free to choose their carriers for packages weighing more than 50 pounds.<sup>35</sup>

Richelieu finally was able to establish regular routes from various cities on certain days, and in 1630, France was divided into 20 postal districts, and 7 foreign offices were added, in Spain, Flanders, England, Holland, Germany, Switzerland, and Italy.<sup>36</sup> Carriers left the "central bureaus" of Paris, twice a week, and traveled at the rate of 4 leagues per hour in summer and 1½ per hour in winter.<sup>37</sup> The government did not make any profit from the postal system. It was farmed out to individuals and they received the profits.<sup>38</sup> Yet there was a gain in that the letters went from one part of the country to another with regularity, quickness, and security unknown in preceding centuries. The creation of relays at this time was a great aid to increasing the speed of the trips. "Indeed," says one writer, "travel by coaches became more regular, and transportation as a whole became cheaper both on land and water."<sup>39</sup> Evidently during the administration of Richelieu transportation received an important impetus, with increased security, faster time, and decreased costs. All this was accomplished by the state and depended on it, in spite of the desires of individuals to the contrary. Created in the interest of the public, transportation, in this instance, was successful in attaining its object.

<sup>33</sup> Isambert, XVI, 158-161.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI, 353-355.

<sup>35</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 399.

<sup>36</sup> Isambert, XVI, 351.

<sup>37</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 399-402.

<sup>38</sup> Isambert, XVI, 450-455.

<sup>39</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 402.

Among the important means of aiding commerce was the newspaper, which traces its origin to the days of Richelieu. "It was," said one writer, "together with the opening of the canals, the creation of letter posts, of relays, messengers and carriages, the crowning event which inaugurated modern times."<sup>40</sup> Richelieu not only used the newspaper for governmental purposes but the so-called journal was a powerful aid to commerce, by giving knowledge and publicity. When one considers that through it the King notified the nobles that they would not lose their rank if they engaged in commerce and announced that certain merchants or traders had become nobles, one can see the effect it would have on trade. Richelieu's constant concern for the welfare of commerce is displayed also in the reduction of the interest rate from the usual rate of 24 per cent plus to 18 per cent. There was a danger to commerce in that men neglected it for speculation. Therefore this more moderate rate was established to aid trade and industry and also to assure a sufficient profit to investors.<sup>41</sup>

Everything possible at that time was done to develop commerce. The government tried to make the frontier the only tariff boundary, but the local provinces refused to consent on account of local privileges, rivalries, etc.<sup>42</sup> No matter how heavy the taxes were upon goods in France, similar goods imported from abroad paid at least as much. For example, a tax was laid on iron in 1632, but foreign iron paid more than French iron. This privilege accorded to national industry,<sup>43</sup> was a part of the protective aspect of the mercantilistic theories.

The question of money was a problem confronting the government in its efforts to aid commerce. The *Mercure François* brought up, in 1631, the necessity of trade and the injury done to it by counterfeit money. A chamber of moneys was established to deal with the matter, on the ground that otherwise the ruin of France would result.<sup>44</sup>

Also the increase of money as a result of the discovery of the

<sup>40</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 461-463.

<sup>41</sup> Isambert, XVI, 406. *Mémoires*, XXIII, 259-260.

<sup>42</sup> Caillet, 267.

<sup>43</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 414.

<sup>44</sup> *Mercure François*, XVII, 713-720; Isambert, XVI, 365; Molé, II, 62-63, 195-196.

New World had caused trouble for French commerce. In 1636, the relations of 38 different foreign coins were established in an arbitrary way. Of course this plan did not work and in 1639 the relation of coins by weight was tried. Finally in 1640 all the lighter French gold coins were retired and refunded into the *Louis d'or* and smaller coins, with definite relative weights. In addition to the simplification of the monetary system the cost of mining was decreased, which was a gain for both the government and commerce, even though not all the monetary questions were solved.<sup>45</sup>

In conclusion, it would seem that the efforts made by the government to improve the agricultural, industrial, and internal commercial conditions, though rather meager in results, were nevertheless important, when one considers the situation at that period. The general purpose to build up the state and center control in its hands was the common policy behind the government in whatever it accomplished in these particular phases of its administration.<sup>46</sup> The coming peace would doubtless have seen the attempt to complete this policy as applied to internal affairs. It was not Richelieu's lack of ability or of knowledge of conditions, but his lack of time, which accounts for his inactivity in regard to these particular phases of his administration. Furthermore, Richelieu, during his administration, was more interested in his external than his internal problems. His accomplishments with regard to marine, colonization, and foreign commerce, really constitute the positive side of his administration.

<sup>45</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 415-422; Levasseur, I, 255-258.

<sup>46</sup> "Richelieu's razing of the fortresses of the nobility was one of the most important steps ever taken towards internal freedom of intercourse within France." Schmoller, G., *The Mercantile System*, New York, 1902, I, 54.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE IDEAS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF RICHELIEU AS REGARDS A MARINE

The keynote of Richelieu's position in regard to a war marine for France is found in the following quotation taken from his *Testament Politique*: "The sea is an object of dispute among all sovereigns, for they all claim that they inherit a right to control it. Therefore, the factor which does so is force and not reason. It is necessary to be powerful in order to have a recognized claim in the heritage."<sup>1</sup> The Cardinal then considers the maritime organization of England, Spain, and the Barbary states, compares the naval forces of these, and shows briefly how he wishes to make the French strong and active enough to be able, in times of war, to contend with advantage against the fleets of their enemies, and in times of peace, to defend their commerce, ships, and shores, from the aggression of pirates. Richelieu saw the need of a strong marine as a means of attaining a powerful state, and so was anxious to exert his efforts toward that phase of his administration.

In order to gain the opportunity to carry out his ideas along this line, in 1626, he saw to it that he was offered the position of "grand master, chief, and general superintendent of the navigation and commerce of France." The duties of this office had been carried on by several officials in the past, and were now put under the control of the Cardinal, as a further move toward the centralization of power which he was bringing about at that time. "God be praised," says the *Mercure François*, "that lacking in power because of the weakness of France on the sea, the King has committed to the care and administration of the greatest person of the century and most worthy pilot of the state, who has appeased the storms of civil war and the foreign tempests near and far . . . , the police and administration of

<sup>1</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 48-50.



the sea, and as a result will build up commerce by means of power upon the ocean and immunity from the attacks of other nations thereby.”<sup>2</sup>

Up until Richelieu's time each of the former admirals and *connétables* had unlimited personal power, and they were bound to come into conflict with other officials.<sup>3</sup> But when Richelieu took charge, all the duties were centralized in his hands. Some of them were as follows: “to give and furnish all orders which will be useful and necessary for navigation, in conservation of the rights of France, the advancement and establishment of the commerce and security of her subjects, at sea, in the ports, harbors and nearby islands.”<sup>4</sup> Thus one perceives that the powers which Richelieu was to possess were very extended; indeed the appointment placed under his control the merchant as well as the war marine. The duties of the Cardinal were defined in more detail than were those of his predecessors, and furthermore, they were broader in so far as they concerned the necessary field, so that he was able to decide as a sovereign ruler, all questions relating to the sea, even to disputes arising over the capture and disposal of the contents of wrecked vessels. That he took his office seriously, and tried to realize vast plans for the maritime and commercial development of France, is the final conclusion of most students of his life.

The way in which Richelieu carried on the duties of his office will illustrate both his impartiality and his honesty. Numerous passages in his letters show that he looked upon the position as a sort of sacred trust. Indeed, the Cardinal considered the appointment as being one which was not conferred upon him as a regular part of his official position, but was given to him with the idea that its great importance to the welfare of the nation and the King, required every loyal Frenchman not only to obey its precepts, but aid in carrying out its functions, if he was ordered to do so.<sup>5</sup> This explains why the Cardinal refused to accept money for his work in this particular office.<sup>6</sup> One of his letters illus-

<sup>2</sup> *Mercurie François*, XIII, 257-258.

<sup>3</sup> Isambert, XVI, 198.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, XVI, 194.

<sup>5</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 257-258.

<sup>6</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 346; *Mémoires*, XXIV, 275-276.

trates very well the spirit in which he took up his duties and some of the problems he had to face at the outset. He says, "that the King, knowing for some time how his vessels were preyed upon, was determined to put a stop to it. So he sent out escorts with the various merchant vessels and fortified all ports. Also, his majesty ordered me to take charge of commerce and navigation, and has sent forward a general order that clearance was to be taken from me rather than from Montmorency (his predecessor) . . ."<sup>7</sup> He then goes on to cite cases in which his authority was not recognized. There existed at that time provinces, where local governments exerted almost unrestricted rights in maritime matters, and thus conflicted with the central authority, which was at that time the "superintendent of navigation and commerce." In regard to Brittany, one of the more or less independent provinces, he says that he does not seek to make innovations there, but only tries to give aid and means to all those who wish to trade, and to do so in pleasing and favorable ways. Many other letters indicate his great interest in the office.<sup>8</sup> And so one finds that after this, he begins to introduce important plans in regard to forming a naval force, which was to be of great importance to France in the future. But first of all a few words in respect to the past history of this new war marine.

Francis I and Henry II had attempted to build up the navy but since then it had dwindled to nothing. In 1603, Sully was obliged to journey to England in an English vessel. On the way over he was escorted by some small French ships, which were forced to salute the English flag when they passed one of the vessels of that country.<sup>9</sup> This was an insult which affected Richelieu deeply, as it indicated the fact that England was master over France, in so far as the sea was concerned.

Henry IV recognized the necessity of a strong marine, but his sudden death prevented any efforts in that direction, so that when the Cardinal went into office, France had practically no power on the sea. "Trade," he says, "was almost totally ruined and the King did not have one ship."<sup>10</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 350-352.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 346, 349-350, 409-412, 416.

<sup>9</sup> Caillet, 287-288.

<sup>10</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 190.

Richelieu as far back as 1616 realized the weakness of the marine, and in his brief entrance into the "conseil" urged all villages to encourage the development of a marine as far as they were able.<sup>11</sup> Now, as has been pointed out, Richelieu's theories with regard to the marine have been borrowed from the ideas of men like Henry IV, Issac de Laffemas, from the *cahiers* of 1614, 1617, and 1626 as well as the writings of Montchrétien.<sup>12</sup> But yet one must give him credit for having the ability to weld all these ideas together in spite of almost superhuman difficulties, and to develop an exceedingly capable marine policy, which was largely put into execution before his death.

One of the most interesting phases of this policy was the fact that he consulted and informed the people of France concerning it. He seems to have especially desired their approval. For instance, the assembly of notables was made aware of his economic and political reforms through the speech of one of his representatives. They were unanimously approved by that body.<sup>13</sup> The nobles felt that a strong marine was the sure means whereby France could develop and regain her former splendor.<sup>14</sup> Richelieu also used the *Mercure François*, in reality a government controlled newspaper, to inform the public concerning the state of the marine. In it the former glory of France is brought out, especially under Charlemagne, Charles VI, and Francis I, particularly with regard to relations in the Levant. Then it shows how the religious wars had led to the fall of the fleet, which Henry IV had not been able to renew. "He who is master of the sea is master of the land."<sup>15</sup> France had existed without sea control, while England, Spain, Denmark, and Sweden had increased in power by that means. Control of the sea meant power for the nations, and was necessary for France.

However, the Cardinal did not have to use many arguments to convince the people as to the need of a marine. France had many direct and indirect enemies at this time, and the critical state in which the nation was placed because of lack of sea con-

<sup>11</sup> Gouraud, I, 176.

<sup>12</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 381-382.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 384.

<sup>14</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 256-257.

<sup>15</sup> *Mercure François*, XIII, 214-229.

trol caused him to take immediate efforts to reform the marine, with the full consent of the people. Of course, there was a certain amount of opposition from local governors and other officials affected by a centralization of its control.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, the Huguenots were not enthusiastic for a national navy. But it was just this local opposition which caused the Cardinal to go ahead. Richelieu knew that the marine exerted a direct influence on foreign relations, and this was the primary cause for his determined and farsighted stand with regard to this problem.

In the first place, one discovers that relations between France and the Barbary pirates were not very pleasant. The inhabitants of northern Africa had for many generations followed piracy as a profession, and at that time dominated the Mediterranean Sea. They had been so strong that it was impossible for a French vessel to venture out of a Mediterranean port without running the risk of being captured and having its crew taken to Africa as slaves.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, no part of the French coast was immune from attacks of pirates of various nationalities. The "Barbaresques" penetrated from ten to twenty leagues into the interior of Provence and were a source of constant terror to the people there, who constantly petitioned for aid, calling Richelieu's attention to the fine harbors upon which to base his sea control, where he could also build up an immense trade.<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, the Spaniards and English committed piracies near French soil.<sup>19</sup> Add to all this the fact that the nobles in France had no scruples about taking part in these depredations, and one can readily understand why the people of France demanded as a unit the creation of a strong marine.

On account of these raids and the unanimous demand of the people, Richelieu, in the second year of his ministry, made a

<sup>16</sup> Richelieu was hindered in his work by many opponents, even with regard to the marine, which had more national support perhaps than any other measure. Some even said that he hid behind the claims of benefiting commerce, to obtain control of the sea and thus to make himself supreme. This helps to indicate the problems before him. See Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 224-225.

<sup>17</sup> *Mercurie François*, XII, 56-65; 75-79.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 65-73.

"*Réglement pour la mer*," in which he brought out the necessity of a strong war marine for France. "In order to guarantee to our subjects who trade in the East, safety from the losses which they have received from the pirates, and to maintain the regulation and dignity of our crown among foreigners, we wish that in the future there will always be in our ports forty galleys prepared to go out and quietly scour our coasts."<sup>20</sup> As a result, Richelieu did all he could by means of treaties with the pirates, as well as the force of a great navy, to make the pirates respect the flag of France on the high seas.<sup>21</sup> He succeeded in accomplishing these aims to a remarkable extent, but his successor Mazarin, through neglect, permitted the pirates to become strong again and continue their depredations. However, there were other influences besides that arising from the acts of the pirates, which caused Richelieu to take such an active stand with regard to the navy.

Diplomatic relations with such countries as England and Spain, which affected both the political and economic growth of his country, caused the Cardinal to consider a strong marine as the most important weapon with which to meet these nations. "On the power of the sea," he says, "depends the lowering of the pride of England, Holland, Spain, . . . against us, and the ruin of the Huguenots."<sup>22</sup>

The best source of his ideas on this particular subject is found in his *Testament Politique*, where, after discussing the advantage of certain types of ships on the ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, he goes on to say that a great state would never be in such a position that it had to receive an injury without taking a just revenge. He points out the supremacy of the English over the French. "This," he says, "works as an injury to the commerce of France, especially to her fisheries." He then comments on the fact that England and not France can fix the duties on commodities because of her strength at sea. The latter in her state of weakness could do nothing. He goes on to relate an incident

<sup>20</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 163-166.

<sup>21</sup> Masson, P. *Histoire du commerce Français dans le Levant*, XVII<sup>e</sup> Siècle, Paris, 1896, 28.

<sup>22</sup> Sourdis, H. de, *Correspondence*, Ed., E. Sue Collection des Docum., inéd. de l'hist. de France), 3 vols., Paris, 1839, I, Introduction, II-III.

in which the British flag had to be saluted in preference to the French standard, because of the naval inferiority of the latter. In conclusion, he says that only force will make England recognize France.

He then takes up the naval strength of France, pointing out the fact that the utility of the Indies to Spain compels her to have a large sea force. "We should be able," he says, "to oppose and put a stop to any of these enterprises against us. If your majesty is powerful at sea, you will be able to attack Spain on her lengthy coast, and they will conserve most of their revenues in an effort to guard their territory. This danger will keep them from troubling their neighbors, as they have done up to the present. For they will need all the power they have to protect themselves . . ." <sup>23</sup> He closes this section by describing the excellent location of France in respect to harbors, emphasizing the fact that she has ports on the ocean and the Mediterranean Sea as well. This is an immense advantage. Then he comments in more detail on her excellent ports. "Brittany alone," he says, "contains the best harbors on the ocean, and Provence has better ones than England and Italy together. Spain has to have a large navy in order to keep her many seaports under control. Just as the sea divides Spain from Italy, so France separates her from the rest of her territories." <sup>24</sup> Richelieu realized very clearly the importance of a war marine to France, because of her weakness on the political and commercial side in her relations with foreign nations. One must admit that his desire for a fleet almost implies aggression against Spain for commercial and territorial rights. These quotations taken from his last work, written as a result of twenty odd years of service in the employ of his country, certainly indicate his final ideas on this subject, and throw very valuable light on his aims at that time.

There was yet another cause which influenced Richelieu to build up a war marine. This was the rising colonial trade of France and her growing commerce as a consequence of it. Richelieu realized that in order to develop and protect colonies and

<sup>23</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 49-52; *Mémoires*, XXIII, 257-258; *Mercure François*, XIII, 208-213.

<sup>24</sup> The Spanish Netherlands, Luxemburg, and the Franche Comté were the important territories separated from Spain by the French nation.

commerce, a strong navy was a necessity. Now, as he wanted France to be a powerful colonizing nation, it is natural that he should turn toward the development of a navy as one of the first steps in the promotion of this idea. "A force on the sea is necessary to keep it clear of pirates, to protect commerce and increase the grandeur of the state. The King takes to heart all the affairs of commerce and trade inasmuch as he cannot separate individual interests and his own. All are involved in the question of power on the sea and against those who would exclude them, thus to the detriment of their trade . . . etc."<sup>25</sup> The question of commerce was a national affair, and affected all. And the very fact that Gaston, the hated enemy of Richelieu, supported him in his efforts to secure a marine, indicates the importance placed on this part of his administration.<sup>26</sup>

"Power in trade and commerce depends on sea power," says the *Mercure François*. "For example, the naval force of England and also of Holland all have increased trade by that means, as well as the Portuguese and Venetians. The Hanseatic cities of Germany also having failed to protect themselves have sought the protection of some powerful Princes on the sea. French commerce shows a decrease and thus the absolute necessity of a fleet. France needs to be protected in war on the sea, and to be strong in commerce in times of peace through protection. Thus not only for political, but for commercial reasons, it is desirable that the French nation be a strong sea power."<sup>27</sup> This quotation from Richelieu's paper sums up his entire attitude toward that problem. He appreciated the natural advantages which France had in regard to commerce, and the development of a strong marine, and was farsighted enough to desire to build up for the future. At no other place is his economic statesmanship better illustrated than in his efforts to create a war and commercial marine, in spite of the numerous obstacles in the way. "There is no Kingdom so well situated as France and so rich in all that is needed for it to become a power on the sea. To do this we must see how our neighbors govern themselves in that work, we must make great companies, and oblige the merchants to enter them. Small merchants cannot meet the diffi-

<sup>25</sup> *Mercure François*, XIII, 229-233. Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 331-332.

<sup>26</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 261-262.

<sup>27</sup> *Mercure François*, XIII, 233-237.

culties of the sea . . . etc.”<sup>28</sup> A combination between the merchants and the government to furnish mutual aid on the seas, was the plan of Richelieu, which would have doubtless produced great results if he had lived long enough to carry it to its logical conclusion, namely, a great merchant and war marine.

Turning to the actual accomplishments of Richelieu with regard to the marine, one finds that it was during the years 1629 to 1635 that he began seriously to consider this phase of his administration,<sup>29</sup> although there is evidence that he contemplated action along this line from the very start.<sup>30</sup> Financial troubles,<sup>31</sup> and disturbances, such as those with the Huguenots, prevented his doing much until later. But he admitted the weakness of the French on the sea, and the injury done to their commerce by other powers. “Our neighbors,” he said, “buy our goods and sell theirs at their price. Now this state of affairs should cease. Therefore, his majesty is resolved to have 30 good vessels of war to protect our coasts and inspire respect for us on the part of our neighbors.”<sup>32</sup> From the very start the Cardinal had a definite policy outlined and stood ready to carry it out even to the smallest detail.

The first thing he did with reference to the marine was to place the situation before the assembly of notables in 1626. As a result of this meeting the grand edict of reformation of 1629, or the *Code Michaud*, was passed. This edict, written by officials of the Cardinal, but expressing his views,<sup>33</sup> advocated the free exportation of wheat and wine except in times of famine, authorization for gentlemen to exercise the duties of merchants and colonists; forbade French sailors to serve under foreign banners; and established the convoy of merchant ships by war vessels; action against the pirates was contemplated; exportation of merchandise in foreign boats was forbidden if French vessels were available; there was prohibition of the importation of foreign cloth; jurisdiction in maritime matters was reserved to

<sup>28</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 258-259.

<sup>29</sup> Caillet, 292.

<sup>30</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 163-166; 290-292; 295-296.

<sup>31</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 126.

<sup>32</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 386, see note.

<sup>33</sup> Isambert, XVI, 329, etc.; Levasseur, 243.



tribunals of the admiralty, etc. If these provisions had been carried out France would have developed a great commercial and war marine based on rather remarkable modern protective ideas, part of which endure at the present time. This code is a striking example of the emphasis that was being placed on the economic side of foreign relations at that time. It is a pity that internal opposition and external problems prevented its entire execution.

Finally, in 1629, the Cardinal was free enough from other administrative troubles to take up the question. He decided that conditions in the land in so far as they affected the creation of a war marine, should be investigated. Accordingly in 1629 and 1633, he ordered two of the best trained men in the Kingdom, Messrs. Leroux D'Infreville, commissioner of the marine, and Henri De Séguioran, Seigneur de Bone, Knight and Councilor of the King, to carry out this project. The former was to inspect the coast bordering on the Mediterranean Sea. They were to report on everything which concerned the marine and were also to reestablish the right of anchorage, which Henry IV had yielded to foreign vessels.<sup>34</sup> "These duties, executed with rare intelligence, cast a rather depressing light upon the deplorable situation in which they found all forms of sea activities, a situation rendered still worse by the conflicts of jurisdiction which were being constantly brought up by the governors of provinces or the admirals or the nobles whose feudal estates bordered on the oceans and rivers."<sup>35</sup> These men reported that the ports were without garrisons, that the coast of the ocean was harried by the pirates of Africa and Spain, and that the harbors and the castles built around them, both on the Atlantic Ocean and the Mediterranean Sea, were in a very unfortunate state of neglect. In addition to all this, there were "river rulers," who exacted tolls from travelers who went up and down the rivers which passed through their territories. They reported in detailed fashion as to the condition of the coasts of France, the duties collected, armaments, boats, the means of defense in the ports, the spirit of the inhabitants of the coast towns, the number

<sup>34</sup> Richelieu reestablished the old anchorage charge of "*3 sous per tonneau*," on foreign vessels unloading their freight in France. See Sourdis, III, 173-175.

<sup>35</sup> Sourdis, III, 173-225, etc.

of ships engaged in navigation, and the number of their sailors, carpenters, pilots and, captains. Finally they gave an exact analysis of the different claims of the dukedoms, syndicates, and corporations in France, and recommended as a result, that his majesty provide war vessels to protect the commercial ships as well as the ports.<sup>36</sup>

Thus Richelieu became aware of the fact that trade was at a low ebb; that other nations because of the weak marine of France could do what they wanted so far as concerned their relations with France; and that the position of France both in the East and the West was becoming worse. He came to the conclusion that something must be done to build up her weak and almost rotten fortifications, and her small and almost useless navy, if France was to command the respect of foreign nations and even of the pirates.

The program of Richelieu in regard to a war marine might be broadly classified in the following manner: (1) laws relating to maritime authority and accountability (the bureau of accounts); (2) the formation of a "personal marine;" (3) the restoration of dilapidated coast fortifications and the creation of new ones; (4) the creation of a war marine and of naval equipment.<sup>37</sup> A brief consideration of the above seems justifiable.

The Cardinal in taking up that part of his work which was concerned with the passing of laws governing affairs on the sea, displayed not only his fairness to all other sea powers, but his knowledge of matters pertaining to the marine. He soon placed the control and conduct of all acts relating to it in the hands of definitely assigned officials. The latter formed what is called his "personal marine," and they conducted and managed affairs relating to the sea according to fixed rules and regulations imposed by him. He tried to put an end to the conflict of authority existing in France, in respect to the control of military affairs. Seven Bureaus of Admiralty were established, to be composed of officials already appointed by certain individuals, and in the future to be nominated by the Cardinal himself and his successors, who were "grand masters of France." They were to have under their control all criminal and civil

<sup>36</sup> Sourdis, I, Introduction, XXXI-XXXII.

<sup>37</sup> Caillet, 301-302.

affairs, and all acts connected with the state government and navigation on the high seas. Also, they were to have charge of the proper disposal of wreckage.<sup>38</sup>

In carrying out his scheme relating to the formation of a marine, Richelieu even went so far into details, as to change the method of getting sailors, which had hitherto been one of the great causes of the weakness of the French on the sea. He had a census taken of the number and addresses of sailors and carpenters in every harbor in France. He ascertained the number of vessels and their equipment, and the number and size of the harbors, and from that information as a basis, he determined the quota of sailors to be furnished by each province, and the amount of money that might be levied for ships and their equipment.<sup>39</sup> In addition to all this, he established schools for pilots, put the coast in a state of defense, created new ports, enlarged others, and finally established three arsenals. He spent over 359,000 livres in 1635 for the fortifications of Brouage d'Orleans and the island of Ré. He wanted to make the former the center of maritime power upon the ocean. He strengthened the ports on the Mediterranean in a similar fashion, especially Toulon, which he desired to make the war center of the nation on the southern coast.<sup>40</sup> However, the crux of his efforts in building up the power of France lay in the increase of the number of war vessels and the enlarged equipment.

Henry IV had realized the necessity of a fleet, but it was left to Richelieu to carry this idea into execution. "He resolved," says Caillet, "to endow France with a military marine, that is to say, a military force truly belonging to the state, and not furnished by cities, as had previously been the case."<sup>41</sup> Up to this time, there had existed the custom of allowing particular individuals and certain interests to build vessels and rent them to merchants for their protection. But Richelieu saw that this was not a good thing, and, after he had triumphed over the Huguenots, he was very careful to hold all ports

<sup>38</sup> *Mercure François*, XX, 924-925

<sup>39</sup> Richelieu also issued orders in 1635, that all vagabonds, beggars, etc., should be inducted into marine service to fill up the huge gap in the number of men available for service. See *Mercure François*, XX, 923.

<sup>40</sup> Sourdís, III, 359, et seq.

<sup>41</sup> Caillet, 310.

accountable to himself, to make himself master of all the magazines, all the cannons, and other war materials. Lastly, he forbade all vessels to bear arms, unless they had royal permission.

Under the orders of the council of notables in 1626, which had really been called and conducted under the direction of Richelieu, the fleets of war vessels were greatly increased. But it took time before the maritime service was really well organized.<sup>42</sup> As late as 1626, when France wished to put an end to the ravages which were being made by the Barbary pirates on the ocean, they could not find enough vessels to carry out the task and had to get twenty from Holland. It was particularly during the siege of La Rochelle, as has been said before, that Richelieu felt the inferiority of the French war marine. After that he set aside a certain sum each year for the creation of a navy.

From 1630 to 1634, the naval power of France gradually increased, and finally consisted of three large squadrons. As a result, the pirates were suppressed for the time being, and Spain was thrust aside, so far as her claims on the sea were concerned. "It was to be for France and for the great minister, who had increased his country's reputation so much, a just subject of pride when their fleet of eighty-five vessels passed triumphantly across the sea, where some years before she had possessed a fleet less powerful than that of the smallest city of Italy."<sup>43</sup> He must have realized that he had now in his possession the implement by which he could carry out many of his political and economic plans to the glorious ends which his fertile brain had assigned to them. Up to the very last, he was occupied with this problem, although hindered by financial difficulties.<sup>44</sup>

Thus the Cardinal saw his plans reach what seemed to be a successful conclusion. But death took him away just at the time when he was most needed. The splendid fleet, like a flower nipped by an unexpected frost, dwindled away almost to nothing after his departure. The good fruits of his work along this line were mostly temporary. No one continued this

<sup>42</sup> Caillet, 314.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 311.

<sup>44</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, VII, 292, 303.

task, which he had so well begun, until the age of Colbert, and then it was too late to prevent irreparable injury.

But before reaching a conclusion, it seems best to consider briefly the importance of his work so far as it concerns the navy of France. L. P. Fournier in the preface of his valuable work entitled *Richelieu*, writes with much enthusiasm concerning the progress of sea power under Louis XIII. "Favored with the admiration of the world," he says to Louis XIII, to whom he dedicated the book, "France now finds herself famous through your victories. She now sees the great navy and the harbors open to receive and fortified to protect them. Well supplied magazines are established on both coasts. All of which is equally useful in the promotion of commerce, as well as warfare. Your majesty's fleets have controlled things on the Mediterranean. Indeed, Spain has been forced to acknowledge the power of the French fleet, and thus future glory must be approaching."<sup>45</sup>

M. Masson in his *Histoire du Commerce Français dans le Levant*, continually emphasizes the point that it was the development of a navy under the Cardinal that prolonged the Eastern trade of France with the Levant, which was on the decrease at that time, because of the lack of protection.<sup>46</sup> M. Sue also sums up the work of Richelieu very appropriately when he points out the fact, that when the Cardinal built up the navy, he laid the foundations of a great and splendid system of military marine, which would serve as an offensive arm to combat the enemies of France, and as a shield or protection to aid her commerce, and thus by making transportation of goods safer he made them cheaper, which in turn aided in the support of the war marine.<sup>47</sup> The Cardinal's economic turn of mind is very well illustrated by the above passage. He evidently intended to pay for the marine by an increase of taxes on the subjects whose prices were lowered because of cheaper transportation. These taxes were, as a rule, borne by the merchants themselves. "His system," says Sue, "was a marvelous exposition of thought, force, and solidarity."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Caillet, 314-315.

<sup>46</sup> Masson, 117.

<sup>47</sup> Sourdis, I, Introduction, VII-VIII. M. Sue is considered an authority upon the activities of Richelieu with regard to the marine.

<sup>48</sup> Richelieu's ability with regard to the marine is nowhere better illus-

It was carried to extremes by those who came after him, so that, not being sufficiently supported by maritime commerce, the sea power of France died from lack of sailors, finances, defenses, and good harbors. Indeed, France just before the world war adopted an active policy developing her war marine, and in doing so was influenced by the same motive which compelled Richelieu centuries ago to do likewise.<sup>49</sup>

After all, this phase of his administration is fundamentally economic. "He," as Sue says, "wished to give also a large development to commerce, merchant navigation, and colonial enterprises, interests upon which he intended to base the development of a military marine, preparing himself thus for the eventualities of a war during the intervals of peace."<sup>50</sup> The Cardinal knew that if he was to obtain the great state he desired, France must be strong in trade, colonies, and in political influence. A war and merchant marine was the means by which this was to be obtained. It is certainly a pity that Colbert was not able to carry to a successful completion the plans for the marine as set down in Richelieu's marine code.<sup>51</sup> If the Cardinal's naval ideas had been carried out, the chances are that the subsequent colonial and commercial history of France would have been entirely different. Richelieu was constantly favoring those engaged in commerce.<sup>52</sup> He realized that trade would benefit every individual in France. "France," he says, "will add in a short time to her natural abundance what

trated than in the complete statement which he has left of all receipts and expenses connected with that phase of his administration, during the years 1631 to 1639. It is a striking commentary upon the efficient financial administrative abilities of the man. See Sourdis, III, 359, etc.

<sup>49</sup> See Bracq, C., *France under the Republic*, N. Y., 1910, 34. M. Bracq points out the efforts of France to strengthen her fleet before the war, so as to be able to meet her rivals on equal terms, and also be strong economically, and thus protect her commerce and colonies from the possible insults of rival powers.

<sup>50</sup> Sourdis, I, Introduction, XXIX.

<sup>51</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 411-412. In 1642, de la Porte, Intendant of commerce and navigation, was ordered to write a general statistical account of the marine. Richelieu was fond of statistics. He gave therein the laws and ordinances concerning the marine. It was really the sketch of a maritime code of which Richelieu's death prevented the completion. See Sourdis, III, 321, etc.

<sup>52</sup> Gouraud, II, 195.

commerce brings to the most sterile nation.”<sup>53</sup> He even went so far as to point out the fact that cheapness of food for workmen would be brought about through increased transportation facilities on rivers, etc.<sup>54</sup> There can be no doubt that he was preparing the marine, not only to oppose his great political rivals on the sea and protect for the time being French traffic on the water, but also that he was looking forward to the time of peace, when he would be able to found the great mercantile nation, of which the marine would be the strong arm for defense, and possibly, for economic if not political aggression.

<sup>53</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 78-79.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 78.

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE IDEAS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF RICHELIEU AS REGARDS COLONIZATION

Before the age of Richelieu, France had accomplished very little along the lines of colonial development. Indeed the period in which he came into power was really the time when the settlement of North America, for example, was in its infancy, so that France had really not considered very seriously, up to that time, the opportunity of carrying on colonial projects in the new continents, although a beginning had been made by Champlain in 1608. Furthermore, internal troubles, religious wars, and unfriendly foreign relations all tended to prevent the predecessors of Henry IV from sending any expeditions of importance outside of the vicinity of France and Italy. On the other hand, other nations grew stronger on the seas and in colonial enterprises. Spain and Portugal rose for nearly a century, but declined about the time of the Armada in 1588. And then came the age when England and Holland gained rapidly on the sea.<sup>1</sup> England took from France the cloth industry in the Hundred Years' War, and built up her state on a strong protective basis. The Hanseatic league decayed and in its place rose Holland. Colonies in America, Africa, and Asia resulted from the growth in sea power of these nations, and the latter acquired wealth in consequence.

In the seventeenth century came for France the age of Henry IV, Richelieu, and Colbert, and as a result colonial commerce underwent unprecedented growth. What little colonial activity had occurred before the age of Henry IV was based on the motive of discovery and exploration, rather than of industry and settlement. But when Henry IV came to power, mercantilistic ideas were just beginning to take a definite form, and the value of colonies as a means of monetary gain

<sup>1</sup> Levasseur, E., *Histoire du Commerce de la France*, 2 vols., Paris, 1911, I, 275-277.



began to be recognized by French statesmen. In other words, Henry IV and Richelieu simply applied in France the system inaugurated by England and Holland, namely, a plan of colonization founded upon the general interests and permanent needs of the country, and not upon such dreams as a search for the northwest passage, or some other particular interest, such as the religious basis of the colonization of Coligny.<sup>2</sup>

Inspired by the colonial activities of England and Holland, both Henry IV and Richelieu tried to foster ideas in regard to the foundation of great colonization companies, which were more or less new to the French people. This was done "in order to make ourselves masters of the sea, and to form great companies, to encourage merchants to enter, and give great privileges to these companies as they came into existence, just as foreigners have done."<sup>3</sup> However, lacking money, as was the case with the governments of England and Holland, the French government could not back the companies, but simply encouraged, guided and protected them, leaving in the hands of individuals the financial risks and the details of administration.

Not much in a colonial way was accomplished by Henry IV. "Colonial enterprises lacked experience and national character," says one writer;<sup>4</sup> "they were too local, weak in capital, and narrow in viewpoint to use their privileges to the utmost."<sup>5</sup> In fact Henry IV did not live long enough to form any definite colonial policy, so that it fell to Richelieu to initiate the colonial expeditions of France.

When the Cardinal came into power, he began immediately to build up the strength of the French nation as a colonizing state. Aided by the accomplishments of Henry IV, and such ideas as are found in the work of Montchrétien,<sup>6</sup> he made colonization a political and economic question, involving the growth of France.<sup>6</sup> This problem was treated with diplomatic reserve, and as a consequence little was written concerning it by contemporary writers. However, it is known that Champlain and other well known advocates of colonization projects recognized in the Cardinal the true leader of this movement.

<sup>2</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 329.

<sup>3</sup> D'Avenel, *Monarchie Absolue*, III, 209-210.

<sup>4</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 346.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 360-363.

<sup>6</sup> Deschamps, 82-83.

Richelieu saw the advantages and difficulties in the way of colonial expansion on the part of France. He knew that he would have to face the opposition of England, Spain, and Holland on the sea. But that did not stop him, for as soon as he assumed the office of the head of navigation and commerce, he began to plan a war and merchant marine and commercial companies, which were to settle and build up economically and politically new territorial possessions for France in America, Africa, and Asia.

His principal aims in forming colonies were: (1) to establish and multiply colonies, to people them with French colonists, and maintain there the Catholic religion to the exclusion of all others; (2) to enliven commerce and promote a war marine for protection. It is interesting to note that Colbert borrowed this policy from him and completed it. "Indeed," says one writer, "people have not realized the important part played by Richelieu in colonial development, or have mixed his achievements and initiative with those of Colbert. In the thoughts of Richelieu, the maritime and colonial supremacy of France holds a place equal to the idea that the Hapsburgs must be ruined."<sup>7</sup> These were the two threads, which were really connected and were to unite to form the grandeur of France. In 1625 the Cardinal addressed to Louis XIII a proposed law for the sea, and a memoir which contained his new ideas, namely, to build up the marine as a preparatory measure of which colonization was to be the end.<sup>8</sup> "In 1626," says one writer, "Richelieu received five memoirs or letters on the state of commerce and the marine. He was himself the author or the source of inspiration of a great number of contracts, letters, reports, and statistics having the same object."<sup>9</sup> Among the memoirs, two are of special interest, one by the Chevalier Isaac de Razilly, and an anonymous memoir of November 26, 1626. De Razilly pointed out the need of navigation in spite of opinions to the contrary. He advocated clearly the advantages of the exchange

<sup>7</sup> Deschamps, 74-76; Bonassieux, L. R., *Les Grandes Compagnies de Commerce*, Paris, 1892, 5.

<sup>8</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 163-167.

<sup>9</sup> Deschamps, 87-88. The many memoirs, projects and plans addressed to Richelieu concerning the marine, indicate the interest shown by the people in this phase of his administration, and the recognition of his leadership in the undertakings to be carried out.

of goods, and the adaptability of the French for carrying on long voyages. (Evidently there was opposition to any commercial policy France might engage in at this time.) Then he outlined a plan of reform concerning navigation and colonies, exactly similar to that which Richelieu and Colbert followed.

In the first place, France was to regain her sea power and make conquests and establish trade all over the world. Also, men were to be encouraged to undertake navigation, nobles who participated were to retain their rank, and merchants were to be ennobled because of their accomplishments in this particular field. Companies were to be founded in which the King, the ministers, the princes of the blood, and great seigneurs should be interested, as well as individual cities and the clergy as a class. Colonies were to be established in the Americas, and according to the anonymous memoir, in the East Indies as well.<sup>10</sup> These two memoirs, which were in harmony with the policy of Richelieu and Colbert, looked forward to the fall of Spain and Portugal, and the rise of France in commerce and navigation in the Orient, the Mediterranean, and Asia. The downfall of the Hapsburgs was to be a necessary prelude to the rise of France as a commercial and colonial power. This likely was one of the guiding forces behind the rivalry of the Bourbon and Hapsburg houses at this time. Colonization was an important part of governmental administration, and the fact that the King in 1626 gave a great masquerade ball to which the fur-trading companies sent representatives dressed in the native costumes of the people of the various colonies and trading stations of France, indicates the interest displayed by French society in the economic affairs of their country.<sup>11</sup> There was a little opposition to Richelieu's commercial policy, but it was spoken, not written.<sup>12</sup>

The Cardinal outlined his program from the very start. "Indeed," says Mathieu Molé, a contemporary, in one of his memoirs, "the Cardinal wished to present to the assembly of notables in 1627 some new edicts concerning the state of the marine, trade, and navigation, in order to justify his position as head of the kingdom. He established by means of an edict,

<sup>10</sup> Deschamps, 90-93.

<sup>11</sup> *Mercuré François*, XII, 187-190.

<sup>12</sup> Deschamps, 131.

a perpetual navy of forty-five vessels, which he said would return the French war marine to its former state of splendor. He also wished to create some important companies to which he would grant privileges. He then appointed me to examine the first proposition which was made by Nicholas Witte, Jean du Meurier, esquire, and other French and Flemish merchants, who have formed a company called, '*La Nacelle de Saint Pierre Fleurdelisée*,' with the purpose of establishing in France an immense trade in all merchandise which enters into commerce, of introducing fisheries, of building vessels, and other uncommon duties, and finally of increasing in value lands and colonies which have not returned much profit hitherto.''<sup>13</sup> This company was to build up not only French colonies, but France itself.

The text of the agreement adopted by the Cardinal with respect to this company is to be found in the notes or memoirs of Mathieu Molé. Since it gives a correct idea of all that relates to external commerce and to the great industries, it seems best to give the principal articles of the contract, especially in as much as all the companies formed by Richelieu conformed more or less rigidly to this type.<sup>41</sup>

I. The heads of the company were to take over 400 families within a month of the day of negotiating the agreement. These families were to be composed of persons suitable for commerce, fishing, manufacturing, and agriculture. Besides these, there were to be sent no less than twelve vessels completely equipped for the expedition. By so doing, the aforesaid company would be allowed to trade both by seas, rivers, and land, to establish fisheries upon the sea, and manufacturing concerns of all sorts, to plant sugar cane and refine sugar, to work mines, to make porcelain vessels and crockery by the methods of the Indies and of Italy, and finally, to use all other resources and manufactures which they recognize.

II. All Flemings, Hollanders, and others who should go over to the colonies were to be regarded as Frenchmen and enjoy all their rights.

III. Rewards were offered to those who invested money in the company or worked on behalf of it. The crown intended

<sup>13</sup> Molé, Mathieu, *Mémoires*, 4 vols., Paris, 1855, I, 422-448.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, I, 422-448.

to honor those who took up the work more than ever before, in order to attract persons who were capable of aiding the proposition in any way. People of every condition, clergy, nobles, and officials could enter and put their money into the company without injuring their position or endangering their privileges. Indeed, in order to aid industry and colonization, His Majesty was to ennoble thirty-two persons, whether they were Frenchmen or foreigners, who would enter the company during the first year of its establishment, and put at least 5000 pounds into its funds without having the power to withdraw the money for six years, and also some who did not invest any capital in the enterprise, but who devoted all their ability and energy to the advancement of the aforesaid company.

IV. His Majesty was to give the company two sites not occupied as yet, one on the ocean, the other on the Mediterranean. They were to have the power to build houses of business in those places. In each of these a market place was to be established with fairs (two yearly fairs of eight days each), etc. All inhabitants should be exempt from the payment of the *aides*, *tailles*, etc., which fell upon other ports.

Articles V and VI provided for the government and the working of the mines in those territories, in which the colonies were to have supreme rights, subject only to the final decision of the "grand master of commerce," who was Richelieu.

VII. All vagabonds, beggars, petty criminals, etc., were to be taken by His Majesty's orders into the employ of the company.

VIII. His Majesty was to allow the company to undertake voyages abroad, to establish colonies at advisable places, even in Canada and New France, to conquer lands beyond those which were under the control of His Majesty, to use them for profits of the aforesaid company, to which full and entire possession was given, on condition that they should be faithful and swear homage to His Majesty. The latter permitted them to trade with all companies which were not declared enemies of the Kingdom, and even countries like Russia, Norway, Sweden, and Hamburg... The articles of agreement which were made with the latter nations, were to be communicated to Richelieu as superintendent of commerce and navigation. Fin-

ally, "if the directors of the company should discover new lands, they could enjoy the fruits of them separate from the other colonies."

The principal articles of this agreement have been given, because they indicate the main ideas of the Cardinal's policy toward colonization. It shows first that he desired to develop the colonies. It illustrates the fact that he wanted to found possessions, which were to be almost self-governing, with this one exception, — they were to be responsible to the chief of commerce and navigation in France. In fact, Richelieu put himself at the head of almost all commercial companies founded at that time. Masson criticizes Richelieu because he made the colonial companies too centralized, and forced them all to depend on the government of France as a final authority. Yet the agreement cited above seems to give the colonies plenty of leeway in which to develop without interference of the home power.<sup>15</sup>

But, before generalizing concerning Richelieu's colonial policies, it is well to look further into the actual accomplishments of the Cardinal in that particular field.

The company whose charter has just been quoted failed because of the lack of credit and funds to maintain it. Furthermore, the directors did not carry out their promises and sought only to profit by the monopoly which they possessed and from which they derived temporary gains. They kept up the project with one purpose in view, namely, to sell to the colonists who had been sent over, goods at a high price, and to buy furs from them as cheaply as possible. Champlain never ceased to protest against the attitude of the directors toward the colonists.<sup>16</sup> He himself desired to found a colony which would take up the threefold purpose of colonization, namely, agriculture, conversion of the natives, and commerce. The only result of his plan was the establishment of new fur-trading stations in North America. But there is another explanation for the failure of the company. It was too far-reaching in its scope and plans in that it proposed a thousand things to do and a thousand ends to achieve. It wished to establish fisheries, exploit mines, drain marshes, develop both foreign and domestic commerce, colonize the West Indies, etc. It was a universal company, but fell before it got really started. It was a society which wished to

<sup>15</sup> Masson, *Histoire du Commerce Français dans le Levant*, 174.

<sup>16</sup> Caillet, 337; Zeller, B., *Richelieu*, London, 1884, 184.

embrace all, but it could not organize itself.<sup>17</sup> In the last place it was, perhaps, too modern in its purpose.

The company of Morbihan, was the next to be formed, in 1626. It obtained its name from a port in Brittany, where its counting offices were established. A group of men called "the Hundred Associates" signed the agreement, so that it was often called "The Hundred Associates" company. Its articles provided for a fort at Morbihan, 100 vessels, a capital of 1,600,000 *livres* and the monopoly of the commerce of the East and the Levant by land and by sea.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, such was the magnitude of its designs that Richelieu says the English and Dutch were alarmed, fearing that the King by that means would soon make himself master of the sea.<sup>19</sup> Spain had no less fear for her Indies and well might have, when one reads in Richelieu's *Testament Politique* the statement, that the only way to obtain footing in the West Indies, is by driving the Spanish out by means of a war.<sup>20</sup> However, this company came to naught, because of the failure of the local *Parlement* to register the edict creating it, arising from a conflict between it and the local estates general of the province in which Morbihan was located.<sup>21</sup> Yet the formation of this company had important results in that herein one finds de Razilly's idea realized; namely, that colonial enterprises should be participated in by all.<sup>22</sup> In it is apparent the disinterested stand taken by the Cardinal with respect to colonization. In return for all the advantages given the company, Richelieu demanded only one thing, namely, that it would make the greatest and most rapid fortune that was possible, and in whatever manner it wished, either by fisheries, by boat building, or by cultivating the soil of the colonies or by establishing some manufactures, etc. "It was an admirable example of broad and decisive views which indicate the correct judgment of the great man in all affairs of state," says one writer.<sup>23</sup> This company likewise did not

<sup>17</sup> Bonassieux, 363.

<sup>18</sup> Levasseur, 281-282.

<sup>19</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 127.

<sup>20</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 71.

<sup>21</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 128.

<sup>22</sup> Deschamps, 88-91.

<sup>23</sup> Gouraud, I, 197. Concerning this Company see Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 346-349; *Mercurie François*, XII, 44, etc.; Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 127.

succeed apparently because of the fact that the people of France were not capable of so great commercial enterprises at that time. However, Richelieu went on and formed other colonies, not at all discouraged by past failures. In this connection it is important to remember that his company was the prototype of the East India company of a later date.

Richelieu now turned his attention to America. Various attempts had been made to settle that country before his time, and there was no little interest to be found in France concerning this far-away land of promise. The first voyage by Frenchmen were those of Jacques Cartier, Robeval, and others from 1524 to 1599. In 1541 the first attempt at a permanent establishment was made by Robeval. It was abandoned the next year. Various companies began to be formed to settle in Canada. Finally one was established in 1602 by the leading traders of Dieppe, Rouen, and La Rochelle, with fur trade privileges, etc. Explorations were made under the leadership of one especially notable man, Champlain. In 1603 Sieur De Monts became chief of the colony of Canada, undertaking to give the King one sixteenth of the product of the mines. In 1606, in addition to the fur trade, the farming and exploration of the new territory began to be considered seriously. Some new explorations had made known the fertility of the soil. In 1608, Champlain was again sent out by a company with three vessels, which repopled Port Royal and founded Quebec. But failure to take up agriculture in the colonies and constant opposition on the part of Holland prevented any of the French colonial plans from achieving a substantial measure of success before 1627.

At this time a new company was formed called the company of the "Hundred Associates" of New France or Canada. This organization, which lasted longer than any other of Richelieu's creation, was granted its charter in an edict issued by him when before La Rochelle.<sup>24</sup> Many merchant traders and other rich persons had proposed to form companies to support the colonies already there, and to establish new ones in the vast and little known country. It was to these first associates that the King by his edict conceded the following privileges and conditions: the company must send two or three hundred men of all

<sup>24</sup> Bonassieux, 350-351.



trades, and during the following fifteen years four thousand persons of both sexes. The company should support the inhabitants for three years. No foreigners or Protestants should be among them. Furthermore, three churchmen should be in each habitation, etc. Homage was to be paid to the King, and a crown of gold to the weight of eight marks, should be given him on his accession to the throne.

In return for these requirements, the company was to have the following privileges: full proprietorship of Quebec with all the land reaching from Florida to the Arctic region, including the land of the Saint Lawrence river; the cession of all mines and minerals discovered; the right to build fortresses; monopoly of the fur trade and other commerce, etc. Fishing rights were to be open to all the King's subjects. The King was to give two war vessels, and grant exemption from customs. Finally, the principal personages were to receive letters of nobility.<sup>25</sup>

However, in spite of the encouragement given the colonists by the government, they failed in the end because of the fact that they tried to buy from their colonists goods at a low price, and sell to them at a high price. This was also the case with the natives, who preferred to trade with the English and Dutch who gave them better prices. Then there was a lack of support in the mother country easily to be explained by the difficulties confronting France during this period. As a result, the Dutch soon obtained most of the commerce with the natives, and in 1629 the English captured Quebec and the surrounding territory.<sup>26</sup>

In 1632, Champlain pointed out to Richelieu the necessity for the restitution of New France to the mother country.<sup>27</sup> As a result the Cardinal sent six armed vessels across the Atlantic and compelled the English to cede it back. Thus in 1633, the company of New France reentered upon all its former rights. Champlain as head of the French colony built up the settle-

<sup>25</sup> Isambert, XVI, 221-222.

<sup>26</sup> *Mercure François*, XIV, 61, 232-240. Gives a complete account of the colony including a discussion of its control by means of a board of directors, etc.

<sup>27</sup> Caillet, 342-345, Dumont J. *Corps Universel Diplomatique du Droit des Gens*, 8 vols., Supplement, 5 vols. Amst., et La Haye, (1726-1739), VI, pt. I, 31-32

ment and companies to a degree never before attained. In 1640, Montreal was founded and a fort called Fort Richelieu was established just above where Quebec is at present, so that, by the time of Richelieu's death, the French possessions in North America had a good start, and it was not due to any direct fault of his that they failed in the end.

One writer, in accounting for the decline of the colonies, places the blame on the cupidity of the merchants, who neglected agriculture for a selfishly conducted fur trade. Furthermore, religious influences had a tendency to injure the economic development of the colonies. Too much emphasis was placed on religion to the neglect of agriculture.<sup>28</sup> The competition of the English and Dutch for the Indian trade, and of the governors and the colonists, coupled with increasing neglect of the colonies by the home government, after Richelieu's time, all tended to ruin the bright future of the French possessions in America. Indeed, one cannot explain the failure of French colonial policy at this time as being due to Richelieu's centralized system of settlements. There are too many other incidents which go to make up a logical account of its non-success.

No better example of the difficulties confronting the Cardinal with relation to foreign opposition is to be found than in his efforts to secure a foothold in the West Indies and South America. A company of the Antilles was formed in spite of the opposition of Spain and Portugal, who claimed sole command of the seas surrounding that particular part of the world. The question of the freedom of the sea then came up for the first time in French history when France in company with Holland (the famous work of Grotius, *Mare Liberum*, appeared in 1608) affirmed with energy that doctrine. Thus began the conflict between interests and doctrines which continues up to the present time. In this particular case, the conflict prevented France from doing anything in a colonial way, either in South America or the West Indies. In 1625, the French and English established a colony on the island of "Saint-Kitts" which was destroyed by the Spanish, and revived by the French later on.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 430-431. He defends Richelieu's policy in excluding the Protestants from colonies because of their constant efforts to form alliances with the enemies of France.

<sup>29</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 434-435; Isambert, XVI, 421, 540-551.

Other islands as Guadeloupe, Martinique, Dominique, etc., were occupied by the French. A settlement was made even in Guiana. "Indeed," says one writer, "the French in their settlements in the West Indies, gave proof of brilliant qualities, perseverance, and initiative never exhibited before."<sup>30</sup> But the important thing to notice is the fact that French and Spanish colonial interests were conflicting very sharply during the Thirty Years' War, and this economic rivalry must certainly have had more or less influence on the diplomatic relations between the two countries. France was striving for a world colonial empire during Richelieu's administration.

About the time the French were colonizing America, they were also undertaking the task of assuming close relations with the Orient. Missionaries were the means by which their efforts were to be made successful. The famous Father Joseph was named by the Pope in 1625, director of missions in the Levant; and that nomination, together with the office of "grand master of navigation, etc.," acquired by Richelieu about the same time, is direct evidence as to their aims in regard to colonial and commercial expansion. Of course religion was the prime motive of this movement in Asia, but it is interesting to note that the French Jesuits sent into China, Japan, Persia, etc., were also diplomatic agents of the government.<sup>31</sup>

The first society to trade in the East Indies was formed by Henry IV in 1604, with exclusive rights for fifteen years. It had the port of Brest and was otherwise favored by the government. The jealousy of other nations prevented this company from buying the necessary equipment from them. Thus it did not really start at all. Letters patent, however, in 1615, gave the company a new lease of life, and brave adventurers from Dieppe visited the East Indies and Madagascar.<sup>32</sup> Finally in 1642, Richelieu granted several individuals exclusive privileges in the East Indies for ten years. So it is quite evident that France definitely began her East India policy at this time.

Settlements were established even in Africa. Senegal especially attracted the attention of the French. In 1621-1626 a colony was formed, which was under the protection of the Cardinal

<sup>30</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 439-440.

<sup>31</sup> Deschamps, 102-105.

<sup>32</sup> Isambert, XVI, 78-82.

and which had as its purpose the colonization of the land in that territory.<sup>33</sup> To carry this out, Richelieu even sent Admiral de Razilly with a squadron to aid in the work, but it was of no avail, for the company had to be replaced in 1633 by a new one composed of the merchants of Rouen and Dieppe, who obtained permission to trade for ten years at Cape Verde and upon the rivers in Senegal. Various other similar organizations were formed, but nothing of especial importance can be obtained from a study of French colonization in Africa at this time, except that a foundation for French influence in that continent was laid, which might have amounted to more than it did, and only recently has been utilized.

One colony, established on the island of Madagascar, seems to have been more or less permanent. Many attempts had been made during the reign of Henry IV and during the first year of the rule of Louis XIII, to found settlements on this and neighboring islands. There was another purpose in the establishment of a colony here besides mere colonization, namely, that the French intended to use this possession as a base or half-way house, for their trade with the East Indies. On March 2, 1611, Louis XIII granted permits to several men which gave to them the exclusive right to settle these lands and begin trade. They had besides a monopoly in all commerce carried on with the East Indies for the next twelve years. But as they made no use of that privilege, the merchants of Rouen resolved to take it away from them. They offered to carry on that trade and develop it to the fullest extent, as they had the facilities to do if they had the chance.<sup>34</sup> The first company, however, opposed any interference with their rights, and claimed that they were doing the best they could, considering the obstacles which were erected by the foreign neighbors of France. As a result of all this, the various companies and claimants of their rights were united by the government into one concern.

The grant establishing this united organization stated that its members should undertake the navigation of the West Indies, maintain its protection and enjoy its privileges. The fleet of Montmorency was to defend all the subjects of the King, as well as the interests of the company, and to undertake any

<sup>33</sup> Caillet, 352-358.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 353-355.

necessary trips from the coast to the Cape of Good Hope during this space of twelve years, in order to aid commerce. In spite of this liberal charter and the various attempts made to settle the East Indies, the plan failed in 1620, because of the pressure of the Dutch in that part of the world.

Finally, the company decided to place a colony on the island of Madagascar, in the hope that if they could found a powerful settlement there, it would serve to aid in further expeditions to the Indies. So they went back to the original plan which had been changed when the different colonizing organizations had been united. However, internal disturbances in France, which took place in 1631, prevented them from carrying out this plan.

In 1638, another attempt was made by a man from Rouen to found a colony in Madagascar, and he left a very interesting account of a voyage to that island.<sup>35</sup> Finally, a new company was formed January 24, 1642, which obtained from the Cardinal the exclusive privilege of sending into the island of Madagascar and other adjacent islands the members of the organization, to establish colonies and take possession in the name of the King.<sup>36</sup> As a result, in the month of May a ship was sent to the islands, and they took formal possession. Thus Madagascar was at last a real possession of France and a way was prepared for further settlement. This was the final colonizing project started by Richelieu.

What were the general results of all the efforts of the Cardinal and his co-workers along this line? "Geographical knowledge was extended if nothing else," says one writer in relating the results of the colonial efforts of France during this period. "Richelieu himself," he says "aided a man named Sanson to found a geographical school at that time."<sup>37</sup> But there were other gains more important than these, especially on the economic side, for which the Cardinal merits considerable praise.

When one looks over the field of the colonial activities undertaken during Richelieu's time, he must conclude that very little had been accomplished on the material side. It seems that all the efforts of the Cardinal were in vain, and while Holland,

<sup>35</sup> Caillet, 355-357.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 357-358.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 358.

England, and Spain were forging ahead in their colonial development and commercial activities, France was doing scarcely anything along these lines. But the Cardinal deserves great credit for the part he played in the colonial development of France. In spite of many internal troubles, such as the relations of the government and nobles, and his complicated foreign policies, he was always interested in planting new French settlements on great unoccupied continents, and he aided in the different colonization enterprises not only during the first part of his rule, but up to the very last. He at least laid the foundation of the French colonial policy.

Finally, one must not forget that this great man died before he could carry out his ideas as regards this part of his administration. His *Testament Politique* clearly indicates that he realized the advantage of colonial development as keenly as French statesmen did just before the recent great war.<sup>38</sup> Furthermore, he looked ahead and foresaw the future rivalry with England upon the sea. It is indeed unfortunate for France that he could not have lived to see the dawn of peace in Europe, so that he could have carried out his entire economic program, of which the formation of colonies was one important part.

A number of writers criticize Richelieu's colonial policy, not without justice. But they do not look at it with reference to the other difficulties confronting the Cardinal at that time. Masson thought that it was entirely too centralized, and d'Avenel, referring to one of his edicts concerning the formation of a colonial company, says, "that it is a source of profound astonishment to me to see a mind as clear and practical as Richelieu's in diplomatic and military organization, attempt to carry out his dreams of that most peculiar economic despotism which modern people call state socialism." But to Richelieu, colonization was a state affair. "The edict of Morbihan is one which all France seeks," says the Cardinal, "whose execution is alone capable of putting the Kingdom in a state of splendor. The proclamation," he continues, "alarms already the English and the Dutch, who fear that he will make himself master of the sea. Spain is afraid of us also, for she fears the loss of her Indian possessions."<sup>39</sup> This would indicate that Richelieu saw the

<sup>38</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 64-80.

<sup>39</sup> D'Avenel, *Monarchie Absolue*, III, 208-217.

colonial struggles that lay ahead; and wished to prepare for them in the best possible way. Since individual capital to found colonies was lacking, support by the government seemed to him to be the only logical way, in spite of the fact that colonization is essentially due to individual effort rather than royal plans.

It was not the general economic policy of the Cardinal relating to this branch of his administration which was at fault, "but", says one writer, "it was marred by the practice, common to all statesmen of the day, of intrusting colonial enterprises entirely to exclusive companies. These corporations, by which privileged individuals were protected at the general expense of the body of consumers, were extremely unsuccessful in French hands, partly through their excessive dependence upon the state parentage and control, and partly through their total neglect of agriculture, and the consequent failure to form permanent and prosperous French settlements."<sup>40</sup> In short, the failure of the French colonies can be laid to, (1) artificial imitation, (2) religious narrowness, (3) too much aid from the state, and not enough emphasis upon commerce and colonization. Furthermore, the companies themselves are to blame to a certain extent for the weak colonial policy of France, because of (1) bad administrative direction, (2) premature distribution of dividends, (3) lack of capital and credit, (4) bad economic organizations.

In view of the numerous difficulties confronting Richelieu in this phase of his administration one wonders that he accomplished what he did.<sup>41</sup> The very fact that the French people were unprepared for colonial efforts, the numerous internal troubles, financial and industrial for instance, as well as Richelieu's involved foreign policies, indicate the magnitude of the task which the Cardinal confronted. Yet Richelieu's thoughts were constantly turned toward this field of activity. Whenever there was a lull in political and internal affairs, or when he was offered any favorable opportunity, he did his best to found successful colonies in the new lands.

<sup>40</sup> Lodge, R., *Richelieu*, London, 1896, 173

<sup>41</sup> Seeley explains the loss of French colonies as due to (1) strict regulations, (2) loss of population in war, (3) expulsion of Huguenots, (4) too many wars. See Seeley, J. R., *The Expansion of England*, London, 1891, 79, 110.

He even tried to work up an interest in colonies by means of inspiring accounts concerning them, published in his *Mercure François*.<sup>42</sup> Public opinion was aroused, as is illustrated by the numerous publications made at this time concerning the colonies.<sup>43</sup> A few years of peace might have brought about a great change in the colonial position of France. But it is only within the last century that France has been able to do anything in regard to colonization. And thus the general policies of Richelieu have been revived at the present day, and so are doubly important as constituting a force which is now continuing. That Richelieu deserves more credit than he has obtained for his work in behalf of French colonization, that whatever weaknesses existed in his charters granted to colonists were of minor importance, and finally, that the foundation laid by this man which would have resulted in the erection of a strong and powerful imperial edifice was ruined by the ineptitude of the French people and the faults of those who came after him, are the main conclusions to be drawn from a study of this phase of his career.

<sup>42</sup> Deschamps, 129-130.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 103-115.



## CHAPTER IX

### RICHELIEU AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF FOREIGN COMMERCE

Richelieu came to power at a time when foreign commerce was in its infancy and the world was just beginning to awake to its importance. "To Richelieu as well as Cromwell and other great people of his time," says Bridges, "war and foreign conquest were no longer the primary occupations of rulers. When they engaged in it they saw, dimly indeed, and inconsequently, but still they saw, the two grand tendencies of the modern world; peaceful industry in the temporal sphere and morality based upon unfettered thoughts in the spiritual."<sup>1</sup>

The Cardinal's appointment as "grand master and general superintendent of navigation and commerce," in 1626, placed him at the head of not only the marine but also of internal and external commerce.<sup>2</sup> He, at this time, made the assembly of notables understand not only that he was in control of commerce but that he was going to develop it and enrich his people and state thereby.<sup>3</sup> Thus, at the beginning of his administration, he decided to do all he could in his official capacity to develop a great trade for France. This intention is remarkable when one considers the other problems which then confronted him.

In 1626, as mentioned before,<sup>4</sup> the *Code Michaud* was introduced. Richelieu, although an enemy of Michaud, accepted most of these ordinances, one fifth of which dealt with commerce. In this code the manufacturers of silk were to be encouraged by forbidding the importation of foreign goods. Exportations should be aided and companies of commerce should be established

<sup>1</sup> *France under Richelieu and Colbert*, 63.

<sup>2</sup> Isambert, XVI, 194-197.

<sup>3</sup> *Mercurie François*, XII, 759-761.

<sup>4</sup> See Chapter VII, 100.

and encouraged. Nobles were to retain their rank if they engaged in commerce, and, as mentioned before, the privilege of nobility could be conferred on traders under certain conditions.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, Richelieu in trying to carry out these ordinances, really prepared the way for a great expansion of French commerce, which would no doubt have taken place except for internal and external wars.

He encountered many difficulties in his attempts to develop commerce. In the first place, such nations as England, Holland, and Spain were far ahead of France in this phase of a nation's strength.<sup>6</sup> The English even required all French goods to be sent to England in English vessels. On the other hand the Dutch seemed to carry all the French trade with the northern countries.<sup>7</sup> In the Levant alone the French flag dominated the carriage of commerce. But this supremacy also was endangered by England and Holland.

Therefore in order to aid French development of foreign commerce certain laws such as that which laid a duty on foreign vessels, or such as that which prohibited the exportation of wool and the importation of cloths, were passed.<sup>8</sup> These mercantilistic changes had a tendency to aid not only in the development of manufactures in France but also in the growth of French commerce.<sup>9</sup> The creation of a large marine of course was another important factor in the solution of the problem of commercial growth.

In his efforts to build up commerce, however, the Cardinal had internal as well as external troubles. For example, numerous towns and provinces with ancient privileges objected to his efforts to build vessels in their ports. "Les Messieurs de Saint-Malo" refused to allow the King to construct some vessels in their harbors, as it was contrary to the franchises, they said.<sup>10</sup> The Cardinal showed them that it was to the interest of their trade to do so and promised further to enlarge their franchises. He concluded by saying that he was working for the interests of French commerce, which was necessary to make

<sup>5</sup> See chapters VII and VIII; Isambert, XVI, 273-278.

<sup>6</sup> Gouraud, I, 157-188.

<sup>7</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 406-407.

<sup>8</sup> Sourdis, III, 171-174.

<sup>9</sup> Beaurepaire, III, 270-277.

<sup>10</sup> Montchrétien, Introduction, XC-XCVI.

France strong and flourishing.<sup>11</sup> Richelieu was perfectly willing to aid local cities by subjecting foreign traders and goods to high import duties, etc., but he would not permit them to establish independent marines.<sup>12</sup> Thus developed an interesting economic struggle between local privileges and the growing spirit of centralization.

The problems of Richelieu were indeed intricate. Contrary to the demands of Rouen, the city of Marseilles complained to Richelieu not only of heavy impositions laid upon them, and slight protection afforded them, but also of the lack of protection and aid to foreigners whose trade they desired. In other words, while both Rouen and Marseilles wanted instant efforts to be made to repress piracy, the former desired the foreigners in France to be repressed while the latter wanted encouragement to be offered to foreign commerce.<sup>13</sup> The only thing he could do was to consider the interest of the nation as a whole and adjust his policy toward individual cities accordingly.

Now the Cardinal did not neglect the commercial problems in France. He sent, for example, M. de Lauson, who was employed by him in a high position in affairs of commerce and of the colonies, to investigate commercial conditions, and had him return to consult concerning remedies which would aid both the King and his subjects.<sup>14</sup> As a result he attempted to bring about better conditions with respect to both consuls and other officials connected with commerce, and to foreign relations.<sup>15</sup> He even went so far as to send instructions with regard to the destinations of cargoes, etc., of French convoys.<sup>16</sup> At another time, in 1627, he wrote a letter asking M. A. M. de Baugy for a report on the condition of commerce. He assures him that merchants shall be given all reasonable privileges and aid.<sup>17</sup> In compliance with these promises he tried in 1627 to establish a company of merchants in the capital city of each province, for the purpose of promoting navigation, and to give them special privileges. This was done with the main purpose of building up

<sup>11</sup> Richelieu, *Letters*, II, 381.

<sup>12</sup> Deschamps, 135.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 136-137.

<sup>14</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 345.

<sup>15</sup> *Mercurius François*, XII, 782-784.

<sup>16</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 504-506.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 380.

trade. One can find many other letters which illustrate his solicitude for the state of commerce.<sup>18</sup>

Dominated by this view, Richelieu had a more or less definite commercial foreign policy which affected all the important nations of the world. This was especially true with respect to Spain. Richelieu hoped that he might be able to develop the army, make France strong upon the sea, and thus be able to dominate Spain in commercial relations.<sup>19</sup> During the first part of his administration, Spain imposed various restrictions upon French trade, but would not permit France to act similarly towards Spanish commerce. It is significant that Spain not only dominated commercial relations between the two countries, but also between her colonies, and between Portugal and France.<sup>20</sup> Richelieu then decided in retaliation, to prevent all trade with Spain, and in 1625 issued a declaration to that effect.<sup>21</sup> However, the fact that Holland and England were competing for French trade in Spain accounts for the Cardinal's never absolutely cutting off commerce between the two nations. He knew that if Spain could be defeated in the Thirty Years' War, commercial relations with her could be easily settled to the advantage of France. Therefore, rather than lose out during the period of war, he permitted trade between the nations, which of course was of mutual benefit. He was sure that Spain, "whose sole wealth depended on the gold from her colonies," was on the decline, and that time would make France her superior and dictator in commercial as well as in colonial relations.<sup>22</sup>

Turning to England, one finds that Richelieu appreciated the importance of that country as a commercial nation.<sup>23</sup> Her resources, manufactures, and trade were all elements contributing to her grandeur and made her a direct competitor of France. Just like Spain, England restricted French commerce in her direction and opposed similar treatment in France. As will

<sup>18</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 171-173; 178-179.

<sup>19</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 261-262.

<sup>20</sup> Levasseur, I, 265.

<sup>21</sup> Isambert, XVI, 148.

<sup>22</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXII, 39; XXIII, 257-258; Sourdis, I, Introduction, III-VII.

<sup>23</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 49-52.

be shown later, Richelieu's diplomacy, to a large extent, was centered around his attempt to obtain a just recognition of the commercial rights of France by England, and also a claim for equality on the seas.<sup>24</sup> Of course he had to temper these demands, because of his desire to retain the British as an ally against the Hapsburgs. Nevertheless, he recognized the fact that French commerce needed protection on the seas and should have it.

During the Huguenot affair, commerce with England was prohibited.<sup>25</sup> Richelieu at that time was really afraid of an alliance of England, Spain, Holland, and Savoy against France.<sup>26</sup> It was not long, however, before efforts were made to bring about an alliance between the two countries, which resulted in the treaties of 1629 and 1632, whereby friendly commercial relations with England were restored, much to the credit of Richelieu, who even wanted to establish certain rules of the seas which would govern commercial relations in the future.<sup>27</sup>

After 1632 Richelieu relaxed his efforts to settle critical commercial questions, as he knew that the Thirty Years' War prevented any such action on his part. On the whole, therefore, commerce between the two nations went on as usual. Most of the trade was in English boats, and the English continued to annoy the French merchant who came to trade at London, by taxes, formalities, etc.<sup>28</sup> France had to become stronger on the seas before she could settle commercial relations with her rival.

Richelieu was well aware of the power of Holland, and was a strong admirer of her commercial success. It was between the years 1610 and 1625, that Holland assumed a strong position on the seas, in the colonies, etc. She became at that time the great economic rival of England. In a commercial way, trade with Holland was kept up and fostered during the administration of Richelieu. That country was the diplomatic ally of France against the Hapsburgs, so that he was unable to undertake any economic action against her except to injure her trade with Spain through France, by means of ordinances. Political and

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter XIII; Beaurepaire, II, 84-85, 166-7; Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 490.

<sup>25</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 774; Dumont, V, pt. 2, 506-507.

<sup>26</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 335.

<sup>27</sup> See Chapter XIII, *Lettres*, VII, 676; Dumont, V, pt. 2, 581.

<sup>28</sup> Levasseur, I, 264.

economic necessity elsewhere prevented a direct economic connection between these two lands, although two treaties in 1624 and 1627, arranged a more or less clear basis of friendly economic relationship with regard to the seas and colonies.<sup>29</sup>

It is in a study of French commerce in the Levant that one can obtain the best illustration of the real economic rivalries of Holland, England, and Spain with France. Since the death of Henry IV, the former important commercial relations between France and Turkey had diminished, while the influence of Holland and England in Turkey had increased. Centralization of the government of France took away the extensive commercial powers of individual cities. But even this change, up to Richelieu's time, had not aided commerce with the Levant. When he came into office he encountered a chaotic condition in this trade. The conflicting efforts of the central government and the cities seemed to be making matters worse. "It needed a man," says one writer, "with a definite policy, as Richelieu had to make an effort to create a positive reform."<sup>30</sup> Trade with the East had been neglected, and it was his task to restore it.

In the first place, he had to overcome the influence of the English, Dutch, and others in Turkey. They were paying 3% import duty while France paid 5%. The Porte favored the former powers. Inferior business methods and goods had lost for France the cloth trade with the East in return for spices, and was ruining the general commercial chances of the French in that quarter of the globe.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, in spite of this competition, France until 1635 had an important trade with the Levant. Active entrance into the Thirty Years' War at that time injured this commerce in that the Spanish ships and the pirates hindered navigation, while cessation of trade with Spain cut off the supply of gold, which France had been accustomed to send into the East. The lack of money in turn accounts for the resumption of commercial relations with Spain in 1639.<sup>32</sup> One step towards a revival of eastern commerce would be attained, however, if Spain could be defeated, and Richelieu realized that fact.<sup>33</sup> Spain's de-

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter X, Levasseur, I, 266. Dumont, V, pt. 2, 461-462, 523.

<sup>30</sup> Masson, *Histoire du Commerce Française dans le Levant*, 105-109.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-119.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, 119-135.

<sup>33</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 55-56; 71.

feat would have removed the greatest naval and colonial rival of France in the Mediterranean.

“Richelieu has been accused of neglecting the Levant in the interest of more distant colonies,” says one writer. “This is not true. The Cardinal understood better than his councillors the value of commerce in the East, and was not the man to let himself be carried away with the dreams of another crusade there, which seduced the imagination of Father Joseph.”<sup>34</sup> He goes on to indicate that the elements which caused the deplorable weakness of France in the East, were the presence of pirates, poor conduct of diplomatic relations, inferior quality of merchandise, and bad organization of the consulates and their unfortunate conduct. All of these defects Richelieu tried to remedy. He furthermore encountered the war between Persia and Turkey which made matters even more difficult. But he attempted to trade with the former country by arranging a treaty with the northern countries whereby goods could be sent through Russia and the Baltic.<sup>35</sup> This plan did not succeed because Russia would not permit French caravans to go through her lands.<sup>36</sup>

Father Joseph, at last rid of his crusading dream, was sent to the East. He founded religious establishments in Jerusalem, Alexandria, Bagdad, etc. As a result, commerce was permitted to grow up under the wing of the church. Richelieu had other men study the routes and conditions of commerce in central Asia and the Orient, and they succeeded in writing and bringing back vivid accounts.<sup>37</sup>

The Cardinal knew that the influence of France depended on the capitulations made with the Sultan. In 1631 he sent an ambassador to Constantinople to renew the capitulations, “with the very high, very excellent, very powerful, very invincible Prince, the grand Emperor of the Musselmans, in order to conserve and extend the friendship and union of the crown of France and the Ottoman Empire for trade, traffic, and com-

<sup>34</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 443-444.

<sup>35</sup> See 166.

<sup>36</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 445-446.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, 448-449. The best known of these men sent by Richelieu was Jean Baptiste Tavernier, who was not only a traveler but a merchant as well, who founded French commerce in Persia, in India, etc. Besides visiting Turkey in Asia, Persia, and India, he went as far as Sumatra and Java.

merce with our subjects.<sup>38</sup> But he was at no time very successful in his commercial efforts in the East.

In 1633, a committee of dignitaries, nominated by the council of Marseilles (a city very much interested in eastern commerce) on the basis of their commercial knowledge, reported and complained concerning the decay of eastern trade, which they said was due to many causes. They cited the long and important European wars, piracy, the oppression of ministers of the "Grand Seigneur," corruption of officials in the Levant, and of traders, etc. In fact, they complained that the entire commercial system of France in the East was debased.<sup>39</sup> To rebuild the trade of the Levant was a difficult proposition, but Richelieu did the best he could under the circumstances.

In 1639 he sent a new ambassador to Constantinople with instructions not only to protect Christians there, but to aid the French in developing commerce by seeing that the capitulations were obeyed. He was to see that all nations which had no ambassadors in the East should sail their ships under the French flag and recognize the French consuls. He was also to investigate the heavy impositions levied on the French merchants at Aleppo and Alexandria by the natives. If there was no remedy the trade would be ruined, or henceforth be carried by the Venetians and English.<sup>40</sup> The Cardinal thus made direct efforts to strengthen and rectify matters in the East. He even went so far as to give advice with regard to the injury caused by debts contracted by past ambassadors. They should be settled at once in the interest of French trade as a whole.

In spite of his difficulties, the Cardinal up to the very last recognized the value of eastern commerce.<sup>41</sup> "I will not enter," he says, "into detail at all as to the commerce which can be carried on with the East and Persia, because the humor or caprice of the Frenchman is so quick, that he wishes the end of his desires almost as soon as he has conceived of them, and

<sup>38</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 23-24; IV, 106; *Mercurie François*, XVII, 815-817.

<sup>39</sup> Deschamps, 135-136.

<sup>40</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, VI, 320-322.

<sup>41</sup> Richelieu in his efforts to develop commerce gladly accepted helpful advice from others. See Pigeonneau, II, 383.



the voyages that are distant are not agreeable to their natures.”<sup>42</sup> It is interesting to notice that Richelieu was keen enough to see and admit the colonial weakness of the French. History was to bear out the truth of his remarks. “However, as there comes,” he says, “a great quantity of silk and tapestry from Persia, many curiosities from China, as well as spices from there and other parts of that section of the world, which are useful to us, therefore this trade must not be neglected. In order to make a good establishment there, it is necessary to send two or three vessels commanded by some persons of quality, prudence, and wisdom, with patents and necessary powers, to treat with the Princes and make alliances with the people on all the coasts, just as the Portuguese, English, and Flemish have done. This policy works better than forcing one’s way into a country, and holding it down by force, and thus stirring up hate by deceiving them, as others have done.” It is quite evident that Richelieu desired close commercial relations with the East, and the fact that he did not aim to accomplish that by military force seems to indicate his keen power of observation. He knew that he could attain the best results by peaceful treaties in the East and acted on the basis of that knowledge.

He even went so far as to list the merchandise involved in trade with Naples, Rome, Smyrna, Constantinople, etc. Money and merchandise were exported from France in return for the silks, wax, leather, spices, drugs, etc., of the East. “Before the English and Dutch settled in the Indies,” he says, “all silks, drugs, and other merchandises of Persia came to Aleppo, from whence they were sent throughout France, Holland, England, and Germany.”<sup>43</sup> It is the loss of the monopoly of eastern trade which Richelieu bemoaned and desired to regain. “Now the very same English and Dutch,” he says, “have taken away our commerce, and deprived France not only of the merchandise of Persia, but also are encroaching on the land of the ‘Grand Seigneur,’ which they have to go through. The merchandise is then sold in Sicily, Naples, Genoa, Germany, etc.”<sup>44</sup> Furthermore, he points out the fact, that the English and Dutch were getting spices and drugs directly from the

<sup>42</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 70-71.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 72-73.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 73-74.

Indies, and thus were gradually obtaining control of the sale of these goods.

Richelieu regretted this state of affairs. He feared that foreigners would even control the trade of the East with France, and thus his nation would lose the profit to be obtained thereby. He points out in his *Testament*, that the French took more hemp, cloth, wood, etc., to the East than they did money. Furthermore, what money they did send was obtained from Spain in exchange for merchandise sold to them. That France would profit by a renewed trade he had no doubt, and pointed out Marseilles as a city which had made considerable money in the past by means of the eastern commerce.

One would think the attention given the advisability of the retention of money in France, would classify him as an extreme mercantilist. Such was not the case. "I admit," he says, "that I have for a long time been deceived as to the commerce which the people of Provence founded in the East. I believed with many others that it was prejudicial to the state, founded upon the common opinion that it exhausted the money of the Kingdom, in order to bring back merchandise, not necessary at all, but only useful for the ease of our nation. But after having taken an exact view of this trade, condemned by the public voice, I have changed my mind, and if any one will examine the question, he will see certainly, that I have done so with thought and reasoning. It is certain that we could not do without most of the merchandise which is obtained from the East, as silks, cottons, wax, rhubarb, and many other drugs which are necessary to us."<sup>45</sup>

This is one of the wisest economic utterances of the Cardinal. It might well mark a gradual change from the strict mercantilistic view, to a very liberal, if not modern one. Believing in the great value of a retention of money in France, he changed about, and toward the last recognized the fact that after all it was the export of goods which other countries desired and the import of goods needed by France, which counted. He could see that by this means France could develop better than under the narrow policy of the past. It is unfortunate that he did not live long enough to carry into execution these new economic ideas which he conceived toward the end of his administration.

<sup>45</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 75; *Mercure François*, XXIII, 390-393.

Richelieu was not concerned with the commerce alone between France and the East. He desired France to be a distributing point and a manufacturing center for the products of the East, by which it could make 100% profit. In this way France could be assured of a great number of artisans and sailors, both useful in peace and war, and of revenues from export and import duties. In order that the French merchant could appreciate and be stimulated to develop commerce in the East, the Cardinal even advocated the sale of government vessels to be used by the French in commerce.<sup>46</sup>

Furthermore, he desired to make the Mediterranean a French lake. This is best illustrated by his efforts to settle not only the question of piracy but also his attempts to arrange commercial relations with Algiers, Tunis, Morocco, etc., in North Africa. A representative named Sanson Napolon was sent to Algiers and obtained in 1628 a treaty which stipulated observation of all the articles of the capitulation between them. Trade and fishing rights were adjusted and things looked bright again in that part of the world.<sup>47</sup>

In 1630, Isaac de Razilly was sent to settle the difficulties, and he succeeded in obtaining the right of the French to trade freely, and have consuls in that country.<sup>48</sup> Furthermore, the English were forbidden by this treaty to send arms to Morocco.<sup>49</sup> By these agreements the privileges of the French in North Africa and on the sea, and the rights of the natives of these countries to trade with France were confirmed. On the whole the relations with the Barbary States were improved. There was, however, a little trouble in 1633, and another treaty was necessary in 1639. In fact one might say, that in Africa as well as in France and America, Richelieu's work was incomplete. He had ambitious plans for the development of the entire Mediterranean, but did not live long enough for any part of them to materialize.<sup>50</sup>

Richelieu did not confine his attentions only to the East in his effort to develop foreign commerce. One finds for instance, that he desired to sell to the Swiss, French salt, which

<sup>46</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 76-77.

<sup>47</sup> Lavasseur, I, 266-267; Dumont, V, pt. 2, 559-560.

<sup>48</sup> Isambert, XVI, 357-359.

<sup>49</sup> *Mercurie François*, XVII, pt., II, 181; Dumont, V, pt. 2, 613-614.

<sup>50</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 453-455; Dumont, VI, pt. I, 18.

was better than German salt, and at a more reasonable price. He hoped by this means to pay the pensions due the Swiss soldiers.<sup>51</sup> Indeed it would seem as if the Cardinal was planning on using the salt resources of France as one of its financial foundations. No wonder he did not want to lose La Rochelle.

With regard to Poland, Richelieu made an interesting remark. He said in 1629, that France had little trade with Poland because the former had no need of wheat or wood, which could be obtained in nearer markets, in Norway and Denmark. Furthermore, she could get tar from Norway and Kather from Sweden, so that trade with that country was not really important.<sup>52</sup> However, Richelieu admitted that the Austrians dominated Poland at that time, which may account to a certain degree for his attitude toward the latter. He declared that France furnished Poland some salt and wine, which the Dutch really controlled. "Our more important trade is in Spain, Italy, and the Levant. England might better desire peace in Poland because of her great trade with that nation."<sup>53</sup> Here one sees a clever effort on Richelieu's part to push England into the conflict in 1630 because of commercial interests in the north. The Cardinal evidently recognized the powerful influence of trade in diplomatic relations.<sup>54</sup>

Richelieu did not get all that he wanted in Russia. Full commercial rights were obtained, but the French were not to be allowed to go through there on their way to Persia. Russia was to furnish such a good market for France that they could get the goods from the East as cheaply as if they went after the merchandise themselves. It certainly is interesting to notice that the original plan of founding a commercial company in France, which was to trade with Russia, and which included a plan to bring Persian goods by means of the Caspian Sea, the Volga river, and the Baltic Sea to France, culminated in the first real commercial treaty made by the French nation with Russia.<sup>55</sup> Richelieu was looking out for French commerce and in 1630 he believed that the Baltic Sea was to be the way by

<sup>51</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 289-290.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, XXV, 129.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, XXV, 129.

<sup>54</sup> For further information, see Chapter X.

<sup>55</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXV, 131; Dumont, V, pt. 2, 594-598.

which he could trade not only with the north but with the East.<sup>56</sup> One can see why he was so anxious to arrange treaties with the Scandinavian countries. Also, the effect upon France if Austria had controlled the Baltic must have been obvious to Richelieu. It is no wonder that he founded the alliance against the Hapsburgs and fought his fellow Catholics at a time when the religious controversy still had its place in affairs of the world.<sup>57</sup>

Richelieu desired not only to open up trade with the East through the Baltic, but he also wished to increase the commerce of France with such countries as Denmark, Norway and Sweden. In the treaty of 1629 arranged with Denmark, the latter was promised pure salt from France instead of the impure product the Dutch sold to them. France would have also a better market for the purchase of such things as hemp, masts for boats, etc., which she needed.<sup>58</sup> A treaty also was arranged which permitted French merchandise to go through the Straits (the Sund) with a tax of 1 per cent instead of the 5 per cent hitherto levied. This arrangement was limited to eight years.<sup>59</sup> A commercial treaty was also negotiated with Sweden. In it an alliance was agreed upon which was to last six years, and in compliance with it they agreed to defend oppressed friends, to assure freedom of commerce from the north to the Baltic, etc.<sup>60</sup>

France during this period was interested in the Baltic not only for diplomatic reasons or on account of the fear of the growing Hapsburg dynasty, but she also desired to assume more friendly and important commercial relations with the northern countries. It is possible that the alliances were fostered partly to bind the nations more closely together against a common foe. They were likewise probably brought about in order to

<sup>56</sup> This is especially interesting when one remembers that the Spanish Hapsburgs by means of their control of the Portuguese were developing the route around Africa.

<sup>57</sup> See Chapter X.

<sup>58</sup> Caillet, 328-332. (*Les Voyages de Monsieur des Hayes, baron de Courmesmin en Denmark, 1669*, p. 99 et seq.)

<sup>59</sup> With reference to the Danish treaty, Richelieu has this to say, "It was a great advantage to the commerce and navigation of France." See his *Mémoires*, XXV, 342-343.

<sup>60</sup> Martin, II, 316.

obtain an advantage over the competition of at least Holland in this particular part of the world, and to establish a new commercial route to the East. Whatever were the motives, Richelieu was the instigator of this policy and thus deserves the credit for what he accomplished along these lines. It will be shown later that his accomplishments here had important consequences in the progress and outcome of the Thirty Years' War.<sup>61</sup>

But it is in Richelieu's *Testament Politique*, that one finds his final ideas with regard to commerce in general. He repeats (and seems fond of doing so) the story of the commercial rise of Holland. "It is proof," he says, "of the utility of trade. Though that nation produces nothing but butter and cheese, yet they furnish all the nations of Europe with the greatest part of what is necessary to them."<sup>62</sup> He then proceeded to tell how they had ousted the Portuguese from the East Indies and were preparing to do the same in the West Indies. One can not fail to see the yearning in the heart of the great statesman for a similar growth on the part of France. He realized that if this could only take place, France with its geographical and economic advantages could become the leader of Europe. After all the economic side of a nation constituted the foundation of its strength and all his attempts at political centralization were for the purpose of bringing about a successful culmination of his "ideal state." France is so fertile in corn, so abounding in wine, flax, hemp to make cloth and riggings, so necessary for navigation, that Spain, England, and all the neighboring states must have recourse thither," he says, "and provided we know how to improve the advantages which nature has given us we will get the money of those who have occasions for our goods, without troubling ourselves much with their commodities which are of little use to us."<sup>63</sup> He knew that his country was being exploited by the commercial progress of other nations, and that if she found herself, she could not only develop her commerce and fisheries, necessary at that time, but she also would be able to keep her sailors at home, who up until then had sought employment in Spain.

The development of French industries, French commerce,

<sup>61</sup> See Chapter X.

<sup>62</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 65.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 66-67.

and French wealth was the underlying foundation of his philosophy. "Instead of importing cloth from Spain, England and Holland, let us make it ourselves," was his earnest demand.<sup>64</sup> "France is industrious enough, if she desires, to dispense with some of the best manufactures of her neighbors."<sup>65</sup> He then goes on to praise the plush made at Tours, as ahead of that made in Italy and Spain. France could make as good silk as any nation, was his boast. It would seem as if he indulged a typical "made in France" argument, such as is not out of fashion at the present time. Efficiency was his motto. He could see in the revival of commerce and industry, a chance whereby everybody could have an opportunity to work, so that sloth, laziness, and an extreme desire for luxuries would be overcome. A man who advocated the use of the entire material and human resources of the country in order to create a wealthy and strong state is certainly not to be classed as mediocre either in the political or the economic sense of the term.

No one can doubt that he possessed keen business ability. "There are many advantages in navigation," he says: "The fur trade of Canada is very useful, as you can carry on an exchange of goods for goods."<sup>66</sup> He points out the advantages of commerce in the East Indies and in North Africa. "The merchants of Rouen," he says, "at one time established a silk and cloth trade in Morocco by means of which they obtain a great quantity of gold." He bemoans the lack of a great merchant marine which could carry all the traffic of the north which the Flemish and the Dutch had taken over because the north had an absolute need of wine, vinegar, spirits, etc., all commodities in which France abounds and which she cannot consume herself. (The idea of a surplus of products is clearly brought out here.) "It is easy," he says, "to carry on a commerce with them, and better in that the French vessels can bring back woods, copper, etc., things not only useful to us but necessary for our neighbors, who must get them direct from us, if they do not wish to lose the freight of their vessels going for the commodities."<sup>67</sup> It would seem as if Richelieu intended not only to carry on French trade with the

<sup>64</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 67.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 68-69.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 68-69.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 69-70.

north in French vessels, but desired to have the French merchant marine have a monopoly of the trade of all nations with the north. It was a large scheme, but it fits in exactly with his general economic and political idea of the great state, and the destruction of all forces which would hinder that conception. A great state would certainly mean a nation which was the predominant commercial center of the world. The first step in order to bring this about and assume control of commerce in the West Indies, etc., was to overpower Spain by means of military strength.<sup>68</sup> This was the underlying economic element in their relations in the Thirty Years' War, as will be shown.

Thus, commerce and the methods to obtain a development of it in France, dominated his thoughts towards the end of his administration, and no better indication of its importance, and of the keen intellect which solved its difficulties is found than in his change from a supporter of a high export and internal tax on goods to the support of a lower tax, in order to increase trade thereby.<sup>69</sup>

<sup>68</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 71.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 88, et seq.



## CHAPTER X

### THE ECONOMIC ELEMENTS IN THE DIPLOMACY OF RICHELIEU

Richelieu's entire administration was taken up with the fulfilment of two objects: in the first place, to develop the external commerce, marine, and colonization of France, and make her one of the strongest nations from an economic point of view; in the second place, to create in France one of the strongest political states in Europe, and, as a consequence, place her in the center of the nations united or opposed to each other, in order to preserve the balance of power. He wanted to create, as one writer says, a combined continental and colonial nation.<sup>1</sup>

His accomplishments with regard to the marine, colonies, and internal and external commerce, would indicate that during his administration he at least tried to lay the foundations of his first great object. But it has been shown that he could go only so far in his effort along those lines because of the fact that his second object, the continental supremacy of France, was a necessary preliminary to the first. Thus it was his purpose to bring about the pacification of Europe as the essential basis of all future progress.<sup>2</sup> The method of attaining that end was a war against the Hapsburgs. It now remains to consider the economic motive involved in his efforts to carry to a successful completion the second phase of his administration.

Few people at that time comprehended this ultimate purpose, as is shown by the fact, which Richelieu admitted, that few people could see the necessity of war, which he believed was really needed in order to preserve the dignity and credit of the King and state, over against other European powers. "Merchants and people in general, do not see this point," he says, "they complain about the burdens of war but do not see

<sup>1</sup> Vignon, L., *L'Expansion de la France*, Paris, 1891, 28-34.

<sup>2</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 285-286.

the value of it for the state as a whole."<sup>3</sup> The Cardinal had the security of the nation in view, as a prerequisite for future prosperity. But the people could not look so far ahead. They could see the benefits of the suppression of the nobles, but the Thirty Years' War was above their political or economic comprehension. The need of a strong frontier, the maintenance of the balance of power, and the question of the control of the sea as a part of a strong economic and political nationalism were beyond them. Richelieu realized this and was compelled to hold back many of his advanced policies until the coming peace would enable him to undertake them with a better hope of success.

In his diplomacy the theoretical rule guiding his relations was of course to assure the welfare of France by means of favorable negotiations with other countries. He was in particular guided by a spirit of political and economic reciprocity.<sup>4</sup> The diplomatic relations between France and Spain during the period may first serve as a good illustration of this policy.

Spain, when Richelieu came into power, was beginning to decline, but nevertheless could be a very powerful and active foe. The Cardinal feared her and sincerely believed from the first, that the welfare of the world would be aided by the destruction of her power as well as that of the Empire.<sup>5</sup> This nation was not only a danger to the existence of France on the seas and along her boundaries, but also threatened her internal status. The French Court, which was led by Anne of Austria and others suspected of treason, was half Spanish;<sup>6</sup> and furthermore, according to Richelieu, the Spaniards were more or less interested in the attempts of the Huguenots to obtain independence.<sup>7</sup> Why? Of course, in part for political reasons. Spain desired to weaken France, in order to be permitted to unite with Austria across Italy, and on other accounts. But it should not be forgotten that La Rochelle was important as a center for the distribution of salt. England realized this

<sup>3</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXVI, 87-91.

<sup>4</sup> Lavissee, E., and Rambaud, A., *Histoire, Générale*, 12 vols., Paris, 1896, V, 368.

<sup>5</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 150.

<sup>6</sup> Bridges, 113.

<sup>7</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 19-22.

and Spain no doubt did so, for she herself carried on a trade in that commodity. In fact, Richelieu complained in 1627 (the time of the Huguenot affair) of the attempts of the Spanish to hinder French commerce in salt with the Flemish people. There was evidently a commercial rivalry existing between France and Spain with regard to that trade.<sup>8</sup> When the most important salt producing center of France revolted, it was naturally aided by Spain. The latter country would clearly have welcomed an independent La Rochelle from the economic as well as the political point of view.

The Cardinal, it would seem, was well aware of the commercial plans of Spain. He knew that she wanted to monopolize commerce in Flanders and indeed in all of her possessions.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, he knew of her attempt to deprive the Dutch of their trade in the Mediterranean and the Indies. Spain, he claimed, desired even at that time to become dominant in commerce in the Levant and in Russia, and to prevent the trade of Holland with France and England.<sup>10</sup> The good relationship with Holland on the part of France is partly accounted for by this statement. Richelieu believed from the beginning of his administration that the Spanish nation was the one power which intended to spread its commercial monopoly over all the world, and that therefore its plans should be blocked. Immediate efforts were made to oppose her ambitions. Commercial relations were broken off, and at the same time, about 1626, the French began to form large companies to reestablish commerce, colonies, etc.<sup>11</sup> Steps were taken also to build canals through France, and thus cause all goods from the Mediterranean and the Levant to be sent north through France, instead of going by way of Spain, with the purpose of making France the common deposit of all the trade of the earth."<sup>12</sup> Even the superiority of geographical location which France possessed over Spain was considered from the economic point of view. The *Mercure François* quotes the statement made by the King's

<sup>8</sup> Bassompierre, *Mémoires*, (Société de l'Histoire de France), 4 vols., Paris, 1870-1877, III, 432.

<sup>9</sup> *Mercure François*, XXIII, 334-335.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 4-8; 30-35.

<sup>11</sup> *Mercure François*, XII, 3-6.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, XII, 359.

*Garde de Sceaux*, that Spain in order to trade with Italy or any part of the Mediterranean, had to pass by France at night or under the *culverins* of the islands of Provence. Furthermore, in order to trade with Flanders, Holland, England, Denmark, and other northern lands, it was necessary for Spanish vessels to pass *le Ros Saint Mahe*, at the mercy of the French cannon, which could control the English channel with little difficulty.<sup>13</sup> Thus France would find it easy, because of her fortunate geographical position, to defeat Spain in her commercial ambitions.

The favorable position of France on the Mediterranean Sea was brought forth a little later in the same way. The good coast and harbors of Provence could easily hinder the commerce of Spain and the latter's communication by water with Italy, so necessary in peace and war. At this point appears the definite object of keeping Italy independent of Spain, in order to separate not only their political but also their economic relations.<sup>14</sup> The attempt to form a political and economic *zollverein* between the Empire and Spain through Italy was to be broken, because it endangered the very existence of France, politically and economically.<sup>15</sup>

On the other hand Richelieu knew that he could not oppose Spain upon the sea as he did not have the ships. So he was willing to compromise. In spite of the desires of French merchants to retaliate against the Spanish and Portuguese, who committed depredations upon their vessels on their way to and from the Indies or America, he tried to preserve peace, and asked the merchants not to commit hostile acts when they were in neutral waters.<sup>16</sup> He professed belief in the principles of what is now called international law; although prudence very likely told him that this was for the best interest of France.

In 1634 Richelieu, in order to prevent trouble with the Spanish and Portuguese, agreed that they should have full rights within certain waters leading from the Indies and America. However, he asked that the French be permitted to sail into the ports and harbors of Spain and Portugal, as long as they

<sup>13</sup> *Mercurie François*, XII, 359-60.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 248-253.

<sup>15</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 81; *Mémoires*, XXVII, 222-223.

<sup>16</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXVIII, 204-205.

did not impose on the limits of the ports of the ocean reserved for them.<sup>17</sup> Thus he was willing to concede certain rights to his colonial rivals in return for privileges for France.

At the very time when Richelieu was trying to make compromises, he was also attempting to overthrow the power of Spain in Italy, was advocating a large navy in order to sweep her off the ocean, and was allowing the situation north of France to be taken care of by the Dutch. The latter prevented any attempts on the part of the Spanish to strengthen their possessions in the Netherlands, by means of canals, etc., and thus build up their economic interests in those lands.<sup>18</sup> The *Mercure François*, in 1627, mentions the attempts of the Spanish to obtain a closer union with their colonies and other lands, for the purpose of defence against enemies.<sup>19</sup> Of course this policy would be dangerous economically and politically for France and should be prevented. The people of Flanders were consequently influenced to oppose these efforts of Spain.<sup>20</sup> Richelieu saw the economic struggle going on between Holland and Spain for control of the Indies and the sea. "The rise of either," he said, "would bring about the ruin of the other."<sup>21</sup> As a consequence, he evidently played one against the other in the interests of France.

This was the general diplomatic position taken by France toward these two nations throughout Richelieu's administration. Finally, in 1635 the Cardinal declared that war with Spain was the only solution for the peace of Europe and the safety, the repose, and the commercial rights of the French people.<sup>22</sup> At this time, in spite of the economic rivalry existing between Holland and France, an offensive and defensive league was made between them against the Empire of Spain.<sup>23</sup>

In 1639, Richelieu was still pegging away at the Spanish in Italy besides trying to get the English into an alliance against Spain.<sup>24</sup> The three of them were to drive Spain off the seas.

<sup>17</sup> Isambert, XVI, 409-411; *Mercure François*, XX, 711-712.

<sup>18</sup> *Mercure François*, XIII, 566-571.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 590-595.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 598-600.

<sup>21</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXVII, 362-365.

<sup>22</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, V, 151-153; *Mercure François*, XX, 959.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 383.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 550-555.

Indeed, he gave orders at this time for the fleet to attack the Spanish towns, and (which is more important by far) her colonies.<sup>25</sup> Now apparently, the Cardinal had imperialistic ideas of the most advanced sort. Control of the seas meant colonies to him as it did to many other statesmen after him.<sup>26</sup> His *Testament* shows that this was his final intention and was his advice for those who were to follow him. He says that "there is little left for France in western commerce. The only chance is to obtain control of places occupied now by the King of Spain by means of a powerful war."<sup>27</sup> In another place he maintains that a navy will overcome Spain and protect France. It has been the only instrument which has enabled Spain to retain her colonies.<sup>28</sup> Furthermore, Richelieu advised a strong marine in order to keep Spain from Italy.<sup>29</sup> He believed that the only solution for the economic and political development of France lay in the defeat of Spain on land and sea:<sup>30</sup> on land so that she would not threaten the boundaries of France; on the sea, so that she could not hinder French commerce, and so that France might obtain some of the rich colonial rewards which she so much desired. Richelieu's part in the Portuguese revolt was probably taken because of his desire to break up the colonial empire of Spain.<sup>31</sup>

In one respect Richelieu looked upon Spain from a more or less friendly point of view. The latter purchased wheat, silks, etc., from France in considerable quantities. The Cardinal permitted this trade to be carried on, because it added to the wealth of France. "Richelieu in 1639," says one writer, "handled this difficult proposition very well. He allowed the traders by an edict the right to export goods at their risk. It was a sort of authorized contraband by which both countries profited."<sup>32</sup> This edict illustrates the principle back of the Cardinal's administration. The political and external economic power of

<sup>25</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, 658.

<sup>26</sup> Sourdis, I, Introduction, III-VII; Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 257-258.

<sup>27</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 71.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 52-53.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 54-64.

<sup>30</sup> *Mercure François*, XXIII, 125; Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 81.

<sup>31</sup> Wakeman, H. O., *European History (1598-1715)*, New York, 1916, 116.

<sup>32</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 423.

Spain was a danger to the development of France; therefore, it should be destroyed. However, enmity to Spain should not prevent France from taking advantage of any opportunity to better herself, even though it should lead to trade with a nation with which they were at war. French merchants actually became the overland carriers of goods between Spain, the Netherlands, and Germany.<sup>33</sup>

Richelieu was guided by the same nationalistic ideal in his diplomatic relations with England. The latter country, he claimed, had failed to observe the various clauses of the commercial treaty of 1623. They placed various restrictions upon the importation of French goods, such as cloth for example. Now the French desired their government to retaliate and consequently there arose in France the demand that the English should be treated in France as the French were treated in England.<sup>34</sup> Therefore when Richelieu came into office he had the problem confronting him of arranging commercial relations which would be satisfactory to both countries.

One of the first steps in that direction was the marriage of Henrietta of France to the English Prince of Wales. The Cardinal hoped that this alliance would result not only in the establishment of good relations between the two countries, but that it would serve as a counterweight to the grandeur of Spain,<sup>35</sup> and also would prevent a powerful commercial and colonial alliance between England and Holland.<sup>36</sup>

The effect of this alliance was temporary, although both England and Holland lent boats to France in 1625, to be used against La Rochelle at a time when France was at war with Spain. The explanation for the change is simple when one considers not only the religious side of the marriage alliance but the commercial difficulties in the way of a happy consummation of its aims. France and England were beginning the

<sup>33</sup> *Calendars of State Papers and Manuscripts, (Venetian Series)*, London, 1912-1916. XX, 162.

<sup>34</sup> Levasseur, I, 273.

<sup>35</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 78.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, XXII, 293.

Richelieu must have had in mind the failure of Buckingham to bring about a marriage alliance between the two royal houses of Spain and England. See Montague, F. C., *Political History of England*, New York, 1911, VII, 110-117.

intense commercial rivalry on the sea which was to be the keynote of their diplomatic relations for the next two hundred years. Indeed, Richelieu in a letter said that the three roots of trouble between France and England were first, the religious difficulties concerning the right of Henrietta in that respect;<sup>37</sup> secondly, the commercial side as seen not only in the retention of French vessels and their goods by the English, but in the retaliation in a similar manner by the French;<sup>38</sup> in the third place, the aid of La Rochelle by the English.<sup>39</sup> However, the first cause of trouble could have been settled easily if the latter points in dispute had not prevented any lasting solution during the entire period. In fact, one might say that the first four or five years of Richelieu's administration were taken up with a sharp commercial controversy with England, with the military base of operations at La Rochelle. After that, this rivalry was extended over the seas toward various colonies, where the actual rivalry of the two nations is seen to the fullest extent. The Thirty Years' War complicated to a certain extent their diplomatic relations so far as Europe was concerned, because England was a much sought-for ally, in that particular struggle.<sup>40</sup>

Taking up the commercial phase of the trouble, one discovers a sharp rivalry on the sea, which resulted in depredations on French commerce, which in turn led towards the preparation of a war marine to protect French merchants.<sup>41</sup> Richelieu stated

<sup>37</sup> Even the marriage of Henrietta had its economic side because the French in spite of the demands of the English had failed to pay the dowry which had been promised. In fact the Venetian ambassador summarized the causes of the trouble between the two countries as follows: (1) the La Rochelle affair, (2) navigation troubles, and (3) the question of the dowry. See *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XX, 66.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, XIX, 592. "Seizure of vessels on both sides makes both nervous. Starting as a friendly dispute between Denmark, England, and France in 1626 over the question of navigation, it now began to assume serious proportions." See *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XIX, 482-483.

<sup>39</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 243.

<sup>40</sup> So far as affairs in Europe were concerned, the relation of France and England in the Thirty Years' War was influenced largely by territorial desires. The question of the Palatinate and Lorraine was at issue. England was interested in the former and France the latter. Neither country was enthusiastic over the demands of the other. See *Revue des Questions Historiques*, 1889, XLV, 489-501.

<sup>41</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 279-281; 305. Sourdis, I, Introduction, II-III.



openly in 1627 that he was going to protect French trade on the sea.<sup>42</sup> Furthermore, in following out this policy of protection for French commerce, he used the same mercantilistic policy toward England as toward Spain. He would not permit the importation of English cloth, but wanted England to send over her raw materials, such as iron, hides, etc.<sup>43</sup> He desired to build up the manufactures of France, as being one of the requirements of a strong state. It is no wonder that England was afraid of the results that would follow if Richelieu carried out his policy.<sup>44</sup>

Colonial interests began to occupy a place in the English-French relations as early as 1626. "For," says Richelieu, "the establishment of the company of Morbihan in 1627 alarmed the English and the Dutch who fear our control of the sea as an ultimate goal."<sup>45</sup> This fear on the part of the English is substantiated by the reports of the Venetian ambassador to England in 1627. He says, "the dispute over the Queen's household and the shipping are merely pretexts and not difficult to adjust....."<sup>46</sup> but after that they would never permit the French to strengthen themselves at sea, because they are so close. More than one person told me frankly that not to oppose this would amount to giving the French the keys to his majesty's dominions."<sup>47</sup> He goes on to point out the fact that the French look upon Richelieu's attempt to build up a marine as a means whereby he could make himself supreme, not only over England and her India trade, but in France itself. This and other quotations indicate that the English feared the colonial aspirations of the French and realized that the control of the sea was the means by which France might not only break

<sup>42</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 389-390.

<sup>43</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 423.

<sup>44</sup> In his report concerning the relations existing between France and England in 1626, the Venetian Ambassador to England says, "Richelieu's care for naval affairs, either by means of a company or otherwise; the passage of the Galleons from the Mediterranean to the ocean and other manoeuvres of France all furnish pretexts for comments, suspicions, etc." See *Calendars*, (*Venetian*), XIX, 592.

<sup>45</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 127.

<sup>46</sup> France had failed to pay the rent for the ships loaned by the English for use against the Huguenots in 1626, much to the disgust of the English. See *Calendars*, (*Venetian*), XX, 122-123.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, XX, 98-99.

up their beginnings of an empire, but even attack England itself.<sup>48</sup> "The secretary Conway," writes the Venetian ambassador in 1626, "whom I visited spoke to me and read a letter addressed to the King announcing the great attention paid by Richelieu to maritime affairs, the ships expected from Holland, and others off La Rochelle and in the ports of Brittany and Normandy, the arrangement made by the merchants for a company to trade off the East Indies.....etc. This is contrary to the common weal and is not generally understood. etc."<sup>49</sup>

Both England and France seemed to realize that they were to be mortal enemies for control of the sea and all that goes with it. As one writer says, "Richelieu constantly believed that Spain, England, and Holland derived their greatness and power from the marine. Like a genius, he plunged into the future. He knew that Spain would not control her colonies much longer, that Holland, whether she maintained herself or not, would never be the great danger to France. But as for England, he feared her and the more she increased in power, the stronger he wished to make France."<sup>50</sup>

The capture of merchant ships by both sides served as the basis of their opposition to each other. "This has to be stopped," says Richelieu, "or war will result."<sup>51</sup> Consequently the great economic struggle between these two important nations found a first significant expression in 1626 over this question of navigation.<sup>52</sup> Richelieu even went so far as to call the English pirates, accusing them of committing all sorts of outrages against the French merchant ships. "No heed was taken of any agreement made with France."<sup>53</sup> In fact, they

<sup>48</sup> *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XX, 242. The Venetian ambassador in France writes in 1627, "They are making forty pieces of artillery in the foundries here for the fleet, according to the invention of Targoni I wrote of. . . . The terrible results they produce are shown by experiments . . . before the Cardinal, etc. He called upon me yesterday and said he was going in a fortnight to Brittany, not only to reduce La Rochelle but he boasts that he will enter the ports of England itself, etc."

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, XX, 31.

<sup>50</sup> Gouraud, I, 191.

<sup>51</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 236-237.

<sup>52</sup> *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XIX, 222-223, 286; XX, 267.

<sup>53</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 271-272, 277.

Henry IV, notwithstanding his dire need of the English Alliance, frequent-

even took advantage of the faith the French placed in peace agreements between the two nations.<sup>54</sup> Of course he failed to consider the English side of the case. At any rate it is clear that at the start, the Cardinal decided that if France was to be powerful and wealthy, the English must be overcome.<sup>55</sup>

Matters were brought to a head by the establishment of a marine, as has been discussed before.<sup>56</sup> Efforts were made to arrange a satisfactory solution of the affair by means of negotiations. • However, the piracies committed upon the merchant ships of both nations brought in another element which made a peaceful settlement difficult. In 1627 the King of England forbade all commerce with France, and confiscated French vessels and goods found in England. Louis XIII in retaliation forbade his subjects to trade with England and accused the latter of breaking her agreement.<sup>57</sup> Evidently the La Rochelle affair and the marriage question were not the leading points at issue between these two powers.

Richelieu now believed that he had a good cause, and it is interesting to note how he tried to influence public opinion against England. For example, the *Mercure François* mentions the accusation of the English, that the French were laden with taxes, etc. "However," it says, "if the people of France suffer because of the war, the English endure just as much, and curse the Duke of Buckingham for having caused the rupture of commerce. The merchants have lost all their trade, and the people are overburdened with the military expenses. All for the imaginary purpose of obtaining power."<sup>58</sup> Many traces of the ly protested against the violation of the freedom of French ships. See Cheyney, E. P., *A History of England*. New York, 1914, I, 446.

<sup>54</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 314.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, XXIII, 270-271; Sourdis, Introduction, II-III, *Lettres*, II, 561.

<sup>56</sup> See Chapter VII.

<sup>57</sup> *Mercure François*, XIII, 200-206.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, XIII, 832-833. Richelieu had good reason to desire the support of his people, because of the fact that the war with England ruined the business of French merchants along the coast, who constantly complained on this account. The English even expected the fall of the Cardinal because the merchants of Bordeaux, Rouen, Gascony, Guienne, etc., depended on English trade. See *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XX, 122-123, 151, 257.

birth of the intense rivalry of these nations may be seen at this time. Both suffered, but were willing to endure, because of the bright rewards of the future and the thoughts of the weakness and sufferings of the other side. Public opinion was influenced then as now in the direction of material gains. The resemblance of the past to the present appears when Richelieu in the *Mercure François*, accuses the English of double-dealing and lining up his allies against him.<sup>59</sup> In a certain sense it would seem that the edict prohibiting all commerce with England, except by the permission of Richelieu, was the first step in the economic struggle between the two nations which was to come to a climax in the famous blockade phase of the Napoleonic War.

But the match which really started the struggle in 1627 was found in the aid given the Huguenots by the English. Not satisfied with undergoing the displeasure of the Cardinal with respect to the marriage alliance and the question of French and English commerce, the English had incurred his wrath by taking issue with him in regard to La Rochelle. They had captured the island of Ré and had, he believed, tried to draw other people to their side, using as a pretext the religious question.<sup>60</sup>

At that time salt was one of the principal products of the

<sup>59</sup> *Mercure François*, XIII, 833-835.

<sup>60</sup> Trevelyan says that English interference in the Huguenot question stultified the European policy of both nations. "The Duke of Buckingham," he says, "couldn't blind Parliament to the truth, even by undertaking, with huge Protestant bluster, the relief of those very Huguenots whom he had been helping Richelieu suppress." He then goes on to say that the English were sent to seize the island of Ré off La Rochelle which was to serve as a basis for English commerce and privateering at the expense of France, secured by the neighbourhood alliance of the great Huguenot party. See Trevelyan, G. M., *England under the Stuarts*, New York, 1910, 136-138.

Another English writer says that Buckingham took command in 1627 with instructions first to offer the citizens of La Rochelle the help which they would need if threatened with attack by their King, and then to make good the English mastery of the sea and destroy French and Spanish commerce. "This conquest of Ré would have given the English a good basis for naval operations and political intrigue." See Montague, F. C., *History of England (1603-1660)*. *Political History of England*, VII, New York, 1911, 143-144.

external commerce of the French.<sup>61</sup> Both political and economic interests influenced her to engage in it, and develop the exportation of that important commodity. A valuable trade in salt was carried on in northern Italy and with the Swiss.<sup>62</sup> This might account to a certain extent for Richelieu's interest in that part of Europe. Furthermore, the large amount of salt consumed in Flanders has a peculiar significance when one comes across attempts on the part of Austria and Spain to gain absolute control in that country, much to the distress of France, as will be shown later.

La Rochelle was one of the best salt ports on the ocean, in spite of efforts of Richelieu to build up other harbors where foreigners could obtain this commodity.<sup>63</sup> However, the great geographical discoveries had brought about the rising importance of all the Atlantic ports.<sup>64</sup> As a result, La Rochelle, Nantes, Dieppe, etc., became very important not only in the eyes of Richelieu, but in the eyes of foreign nations as well. Furthermore, they were Huguenot strongholds.

The basis of the trouble was of course England's interest in the Huguenots. The Cardinal felt that England did not have much personal sympathy for the latter. He was materialistic enough to base the affair on the principle of a struggle for sea power. Indeed, to dominate the sea was the desire of France. "None of them," he says, "not even the Huguenots, saw the advantage of the control of La Rochelle because of its salt mines."<sup>65</sup> Richelieu was probably mistaken in the latter part of his assertion. For it is not unlikely that the economic importance of La Rochelle, especially with regard to the salt mines, was the controlling factor in causing England, Spain, and Holland to be friendly toward the Huguenots. Fundamentally, the struggle between England and France was one for sea power even at that time.<sup>66</sup> But the salt mines and the control of the

<sup>61</sup> See Chapter VII.

<sup>62</sup> D'Avenel, *Absolue Monarchie*, II, 275.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 194-5.

<sup>64</sup> Lavissee, E., *Histoire de France*, 9 vols., Paris, 1896, VI, 277.

<sup>65</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 262. Yet Richelieu entertained a fear of the economic relations existing between La Rochelle and the English, so that he tried to keep track of the trade carried on between them. See Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 499.

<sup>66</sup> *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XX, 77, 191-192, 282.

Garonne and Loire rivers, together with the revenues to be obtained from the Dutch and other peoples as a consequence of the possession of the salt mines, must have been objects of desire to the English, especially since they carried on an important commerce in that commodity with La Rochelle.<sup>67</sup> The Venetian ambassador at London seems to have had difficulty in swallowing the statement of the English ministry that they had lately conceived of the war against the French as based upon the sole preservation of the reformed church and the public weal.<sup>68</sup> There can be no doubt that England had a certain economic interest in the welfare of her fellow Protestants in La Rochelle.<sup>69</sup> On the other hand, Richelieu at this point frankly admits that one of the predominating motives back of his desire to retain La Rochelle was commercial, namely, the control of the salt mines.

As a first step in opposition to the efforts of England with regard to La Rochelle, Richelieu proposed a union with Spain. He did this not only for political but also for economic reasons, and even though this plan failed it is of importance because it illustrates his diplomatic skill in political as well as in economic affairs. He knew that Spain and France were competitors in the salt trade. Therefore he proposed a scheme whereby a price was to be set on that commodity which was to be raised or lowered only by common consent. In this agreement he brings out the importance of the salt trade with the northern countries, and then says that a mixture of Spanish and French salt would

<sup>67</sup> *Calendars, (Venetian), XX, 341. Calendars of State Papers and Manuscripts, (Domestic Series), (1625-1642), London, 1858-1887, X, 534, 553.*

<sup>68</sup> *Calendars, (Venetian), XX, 374.*

“After the capture of Ré, they (the English) mean to attempt Oléron, which is also very important on account of its salt pans, and both islands are very convenient as they command the mouths both of the Garonne and the Loire, the chief rivers of France, enabling their possessors to take toll sufficient to pay the cost of the garrison and the fleet with something over, indeed, some say that already certain Dutch ships which went to lade salt evaded a duty claimed by the English, by main force and flight.” From a report of the Venetian ambassador in England in 1672. See *Calendars, (Venetian), XX, 341.*

<sup>69</sup> The French claimed that the English did not aid the Huguenots for religious but for territorial and commercial reasons. See, *Mercure François*, XIII, 809-811; XIV, 9-14.

offer the best market, due to the fact that one was too strong and the other was too weak.<sup>70</sup> He offered Spain a partnership in a salt monopoly as an inducement towards an alliance against England. The commerce in this commodity must have been very important to have caused him to use it as a means of bringing about such a vital union.

Even though he did not succeed in this plan, he went ahead and took action against the English, who were constantly preying upon the French commerce. The Duke of Guise was ordered to prepare a fleet and to oppose them.<sup>71</sup> The English were ready to meet them, for the fear of a union between France and Spain had caused that country to take a definite stand in her relations to La Rochelle.<sup>72</sup> England probably saw at a glance that this was a plan which promised to put a stop to French commercial and political ambitions.

An edict of September 20th, 1627, breaking off relations with England, indicates that the two nations were on the point of an armed conflict.<sup>73</sup> This marks definitely not only the beginning of the struggle for control of the sea but also the contest for the colonial empire of the New World. Richelieu had taken the first step toward this great event, when he began to build up the marine. He took a second step when he attempted to increase the political and economic importance of Brittany and Normandy and make the harbor of Brest the commercial emporium of the world, together with other ports near it.<sup>74</sup> England likely realized the danger which threatened her and even considered the capture of Brest as a means of thwarting the design of the Cardinal, who would have liked to make this port the center of trade and navigation.<sup>75</sup> She was afraid of the growth of France, and even the commercial alliance proposed between the Hansa cities and France possibly caused her to

<sup>70</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 288-289.

<sup>71</sup> *Mercure François*, XIV, 38.

<sup>72</sup> *Calendars*, (*Venetian*), XX, 77.

<sup>73</sup> Isambert, XVI, 215; Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 277-278.

<sup>74</sup> *Calendars*, (*Venetian*), XX, 191.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, XX, 281.

"Something has also been said," says the Venetian ambassador, "about the Port of Brest, which is considered of great advantage for thwarting the designs of the Cardinal, who would fain make it the center of trade and navigation, but when on the spot they will make their choice."

fear the Cardinal as an opponent of England's claims to supremacy on the sea.<sup>76</sup>

On account of this distrust of the ambitions of Richelieu, Great Britain began to look for an ally. It was natural enough that La Rochelle with its economic importance and its relative political and religious independence should attract her. Here was one great opportunity to destroy the growing naval power of France before it could threaten either England or her colonies. Both countries began negotiations to break the neutrality of La Rochelle. The French tried to influence the Huguenots by fear of their land forces, near at hand; the English by setting forth the interests of the place and by blandishments towards the inhabitants, having issued a decree that all may trade and bring food into the town and islands, as, according to ancient claims, they belong to the English crown, etc.<sup>77</sup> The French proposed force, and the English, an economic alliance and old political claims.

Both the English and the French seemed to be well aware of the economic importance of these lands of the Huguenots, as each nation was afraid of the control of the latter by the other. But this fear on the part of the English was likely increased when they saw in the possession of La Rochelle by the French, together with an alliance with Spain, a loss of maritime and colonial power. On the other hand, the French could see in English control an invasion of their country, and a loss of valuable economic territory, as well as the chance for future naval expansion. It is not surprising that Richelieu said that he would not talk peace with the English as long as their flag waved above French soil,<sup>78</sup> nor that in his efforts to convert France from a continental into a naval power, he threatened England with dire misfortunes, when he should have a fleet large enough to defeat her.<sup>79</sup> The English knew when he became superintendent, grand master, etc., that they would have to look out for his

<sup>76</sup> *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XX, 56.

"I believe that Richelieu would gladly listen to this (the proposal of the Hansa towns) for the sake of his marine, and it will generate ill will here by reason of their claims to supremacy at sea," says the Venetian ambassador to England.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.*, XX, 341.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, XX, 371.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, XX, 179, 199.



increase of naval strength and his political alliances, especially with La Rochelle.<sup>80</sup> It would seem that these two countries began their colonial struggle at this time, and it is to the credit of Richelieu that France won the first engagement by the capture of La Rochelle.

For a while it looked as though both nations must fight to the finish. The sole basis on which the French would make peace with the English in 1629 was that England should give up all thoughts of La Rochelle and the Huguenots forever.<sup>81</sup> Richelieu realized that if France was to attain national political and economic unity, and was to enter upon an expansive policy, both Spain and England would have to be guarded against. France must have her place in the sun, and her interests must not be endangered by either nation.<sup>82</sup>

In 1629, the rivalry between the two nations had extended into the distant colonies. Port Royal in Canada and the island of Saint-Kitts had been taken from the French by the English. As a result, Richelieu sent a fleet "to show the English that they were not kings of the sea any more."<sup>83</sup> In 1629, under the leadership of Cahusac, they recaptured the island of Saint-Kitts.<sup>84</sup> Richelieu accused the English of entertaining the desire even at this time to cast the French out of Canada, a remarkable forecast of later events.

Then came a change in Richelieu's policy. In 1629 he sent Chateauneuf to England as his representative to try to arrange a settlement of disputes and a commercial treaty which would enable both countries to live in a happy union.<sup>85</sup> Under these general directions the ambassador had specific instructions which he was to try to carry out. For example, he was to attempt to settle the dispute with regard to the commercial relations of France and England with Spain, for both nations were trying to prevent each other from trading with the latter. He was also to take up the affair of the flags, in regard to salutes on the high seas.

But what was the cause of this change? The Thirty Years'

<sup>80</sup> *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XX, 155.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, XXI, 7.

<sup>82</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXIII, 281.

<sup>83</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 446-447.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 447-448; 477-478; 518-519.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 447-448; 518-519; 477-478.

War had reached a stage wherein the defeat of the Hapsburgs in Austria and Spain seemed a necessity. Richelieu wished England to join with him in aiding Sweden.<sup>86</sup> Therefore, he had to give up his active struggle with England for control of the sea, in order to obtain her aid in the Thirty Years' War. Whether or not he would have continued the conflict after the war if he had lived is a mere matter of conjecture. The probabilities are that when peace had been declared and his long delayed marine had been created he would have taken up again an economic and political opposition to England.<sup>87</sup>

Richelieu at this time showed his diplomatic genius by having his ambassador demand a new treaty from the English, which would bring about secure and free mutual commerce. All agreements in past treaties were to be renewed.<sup>88</sup> Furthermore, the problem concerning the restitution of vessels captured by the English was to be taken up,<sup>89</sup> and at least a compromise was to be agreed upon. England was no longer to place her neutrality in question by selling ammunition to the "infidels," which, according to Richelieu, caused even the English people to murmur.<sup>90</sup>

The colonial question arose at this time, but the French ambassador wisely placed the emphasis upon the other commercial problems. It is significant, however, that in his Memoirs Richelieu reports that the King of England told Chateaufort, that the King of France would produce a better indication of his desire of living in peace and good friendship with him, by departing from his desire to become master of the sea.<sup>91</sup> Richelieu himself points out that even the English centered the entire struggle on the control of the sea. "Jealousy of French power on the ocean caused English opposition in 1629," says the Cardinal, "even the merchants of England were envious of those of France."<sup>92</sup>

<sup>86</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 447-448. Pigeonneau II, 414-415.

<sup>87</sup> See *Calendars*, (*Venetian*), XX, 179.

<sup>88</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXV, 198-199; Levasseur, I, 264.

<sup>89</sup> A peace agreement had been made April 24, 1629, which established free commerce, etc. But this agreement had been broken by England. See Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXV, 199, also Dumont, V, pt. 2, 580-581.

<sup>90</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXV, 199-201.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*, XXV, 201-205.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, XXV, 211. The Dutch ambassador in France wrote in 1628 "that the Cardinal clings to his old idea about establishing com-

The recapture of Saint-Kitts strengthened the fears of the English. But Chateauneuf, in a kindly way, assured them that the French desired only to enforce the peace terms, and that they should have no fear of the growing sea power of the French.<sup>93</sup> The English King replied that just as Queen Elizabeth had warned Henry IV to leave the sea alone, he, Charles I, would do the same.

Richelieu, in order to settle the trouble concerning the sea, then sent Count de Nitschdil as a general representative to call on the King of England. But the latter was not willing to concede that equality on the sea which Richelieu demanded. He said that the French were causing trouble by persisting in increasing their marine power. The French representatives laughed at the idea of another person's telling a great ruler what he should do in his state.<sup>94</sup> Richelieu in reply asserted that the arms of France were always for defence and assistance against enemies and never for purposes of oppression.<sup>95</sup>

In 1630 De Fontenay-Mareuil took Chateauneuf's place in England. Richelieu instructed him to try to obtain the restitution of Canada, and the restoration of the merchandise and vessels captured since the peace agreement of 1629, and to attempt to arrange a good peace between the two crowns, and settle all commercial difficulties. He even mentioned the so-called "Laws of the Sea," as giving the final decision with regard to the restitution of the ships. "Reason and justice are to decide affairs," he said.<sup>96</sup> The new ambassador was to try to settle the commercial relations between France and England, and furthermore to determine England's attitude in the Thirty Years' War, especially with respect to the Palatinate.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>93</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXV, 205-6.

panies as in Holland, and extending navigation. The English will never permit this, so as not to put arms in the hands of thousands of hostile neighbors against an open Kingdom like this, and state policy does not allow it." *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XXI, 446.

<sup>94</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXV, 201-5. A good example of the fears of some of the English people is found in a letter of an English captain in 1630, who was afraid of the intention of France to dominate Canada and New England to the detriment of the English. *Calendars, (Colonial, 1574-1660)*, London, 1860, I, 106.

<sup>95</sup> *Ibid.*, XXV, 205.

<sup>96</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 518-519.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 671-672.

Finally, on March 29, 1632, after many negotiations, the treaty of Saint-Germain was signed. In this treaty justice was to guide the nations in the matter of prizes of the sea, depredations, and reprisals. Commerce and navigation were to conform to the liberal principles of the past treaties of 1606 and 1610, which, according to the French, had been ignored by the English. Lastly, the colonial possessions taken by England were to be returned to France.<sup>98</sup> It seems that the importance of this treaty has been overlooked. The argument shows clearly the competency of Richelieu, in settling not only political disputes but economic problems as well. Furthermore, it was a clever solution of the difficulties between England and France. Theoretically, Richelieu obtained what he desired and strengthened the commercial and colonial power of France thereby.

After this, the Cardinal was busy with the great continental struggle and could not concentrate so much upon the foreign economic and political situation. However, in 1635 he was forced to send a combined French and Dutch fleet to guard the channel. But the Dutch did not remain long with the French. They were afraid of the English claim of being "Lord of the sea." To avoid taking sides in a sea dispute between the two nations, the Dutch sailed away and left the French alone.<sup>99</sup> Now the issue was a question of control of the British channel.

"The King of England," says Richelieu, "in a notice placed in the Bourse, affirmed the English control of the channel. Commerce should be free but under English supervision." But the Cardinal having all he could do to handle the Thirty Years' War, was forced to give in to the English on this as well as the general question of the sea in spite of an almost national hatred engendered over the problem.<sup>100</sup> He tried to keep up friendly relations with the British and retain them in an alliance with Holland and France instead of with Spain.<sup>101</sup>

<sup>98</sup> *Mercurius Francicus*, XVIII, 39-52; *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XXI, 311-315; Levasseur, I, 264; Dumont, VI, pt. I, 31-32.

<sup>99</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXVIII, 359-360.

<sup>100</sup> The English, in 1636, were constantly threatened by French ships. The French sailors called the English, "English dogs." Richelieu according to reports had promised a sum of money to those men of war who could interrupt the King of England's packet. English vessels coming from La Rochelle, were forced to avoid the French fleets for fear of capture. See *Calendars, (Domestic, 1635-1636)*, IX, 561-562.

<sup>101</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, IV, 559-567.

He even attempted to settle the question as to who should salute when English and French ships met on the high seas. He favored their relative location as determining this matter; that is, if they should meet near the French coast, the English would salute the French, and if they should meet near the English coast it would be vice versa.<sup>102</sup> Nothing was accomplished with regard to this point.

In 1637, he again tried to get the English to break their neutrality and come in against Austria and Spain. "However, the gain," he said, "in selling contraband goods as a neutral with warring nations, made England a neutral."<sup>103</sup> It is plain that Richelieu could see the economic forces underneath the diplomacy of the nations at that time, especially when they concerned his enemies. In his *Memoirs* in 1637, he says, "Is this neutrality of England due to an honest love of repose, or is it due to the gain to be derived thereby, during such a neutrality, by conveying contraband goods to warring nations as well as carrying on during the wars the entire commerce of France and Spain. Is that why England kept from a direct alliance with France?"<sup>104</sup> At another place he complains that England constantly aided Spain to the detriment of France.<sup>105</sup> England still feared the French on the sea, and Richelieu realized this as is shown by the fact that he instructed his ambassador there to avoid a discussion of England's imaginary empire of the sea.<sup>106</sup> He knew that England was torn between two policies, the materialistic neutrality, or the aid of the Elector Palatine by participation in the war. It was the aim of France to get her to follow the latter policy.<sup>107</sup>

When the Cardinal died, his plans, of course, were left incomplete. What he would have done after the Thirty Years' War is not mere conjecture however, for in his *Testament Politique* he has strongly advised the necessity of a powerful marine to oppose the claims of the English to being Lord of the Seas."<sup>108</sup>

<sup>102</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, V, 66-70.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 854-856.

<sup>104</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXX, 523.

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 529.

<sup>106</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, VI, 10-12.

<sup>107</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 49-50.

<sup>108</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 50-52.

Richelieu looked at England in a large degree from the economic point of view. He saw in both England and Holland, two of his great rivals in the East Indies and Persia.<sup>109</sup> In fact one must conclude that the former was a definite colonial and commercial opponent of France at that time. Spain was on the decline and he knew it. England was the enemy of the future and he wanted to prepare against her. If he had lived long enough to carry out his economic policy it is a question whether or not our land would have contained one English-speaking nation as today. At any rate the Thirty Years' War put off the commercial and colonial struggle for a hundred years — for better or for worse — but Richelieu seems to have been aware that it had to come in the end.

Turning to Holland, one discovers that Richelieu's attitude in regard to that country was different from that toward England and Spain. As has been shown before, he admired the Dutch industrial and commercial genius, built up in spite of numerous obstacles. Indeed, he described it as a model for the future growth of France.<sup>110</sup> He was at no time actually willing to undertake a hostile attitude toward this nation, although he threatened her with dire punishment when she refused to lend him boats to be used against England.<sup>111</sup>

Just as with England, the economic rivalry between France and Holland, even though it existed, was not permitted to dominate on account of the Thirty Years' War.<sup>112</sup> In fact it seems that the alliance of 1627 with the Dutch, for mutual protection and satisfactory commercial relations, was an effort on the part of Richelieu to enlist the aid of this country not only to put down the Huguenots, but also to aid in the prosecution of the Thirty Years' War.<sup>113</sup> He was constantly afraid of an alliance between Spain and Holland,<sup>114</sup> even though he did not like to see the Dutch carrying most of the French commerce on their vessels.

The treaty of 1627 was arranged with the purpose of removing

<sup>109</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 73-74.

<sup>110</sup> See Chapter IX, 138.

<sup>111</sup> *Calendars*, (Venetian), XX, 192.

<sup>112</sup> Levasseur, I, 266.

<sup>113</sup> *Mercure François*, XIV, 14.

<sup>114</sup> Richelieu, A. J. Cardinal, duc de, *Maximes d'État, et Fragments Politiques du Cardinal de Richelieu*, Éd., G. Hanotaux, Paris, 1880, 730-731.

these difficulties, and of engaging the Dutch to act as the protectors of the French marine which was being built at that time. Improved commercial relations were the result of this treaty.<sup>115</sup> Yet the Dutch were not so friendly as they might have been, as is shown by the incident in which they looked on in glee while the English captured certain French vessels near their coast.<sup>116</sup> The fear of the English by the Dutch, was one of the most bitter complaints made by Richelieu during the Huguenot affair. He says that Spain proved to be a false ally, and Holland an unneutral neutral, in that she persisted in sending ammunition to the English. She was afraid of the latter country and really favored her.<sup>117</sup> Richelieu did not like this, as is shown by his letters. He thought it right for France to trade with Spain, as their commerce was important; but for the Dutch to do so was wrong.<sup>118</sup> International rights were thus considered from narrow national points of view.

Both Holland and France were looking after their own interests on the sea. The former country had before this supplanted French navigation upon the east coast of Africa, and was very strong in the East Indies.<sup>119</sup> She, like England, took pleasure in carrying on depredations upon French commerce, even forming an alliance with the Barbary pirates to do so. Richelieu tried to force the Dutch to accept terms by which rules of reciprocity should guide their commercial relations. "He did not want to undertake a tariff war," says one writer, "which would have alienated the valuable Dutch commerce and influence. He tried to make the Dutch his associates in enterprises in the East and in the Americas. The treaties of 1627 and 1629 stipulated that they aid the French merchant boats, and allow their men to associate with the French in the navigation to both of the Indies."<sup>120</sup> In fact, Richelieu desired to settle their

<sup>115</sup> Levasseur, I, 266; Dumont, V, pt. 2, 523.

<sup>116</sup> *Mercure François*, XIV, 159.

<sup>117</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 66, 78.

<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, III, 471. Holland as a matter of fact was rather in sympathy with the Huguenots and the English as against Richelieu. She not only refused to take action as an ally of France, but would only lend boats to the French to be used against Austria and Spain. See *Calendars*, (*Venetian*), XX, 115, 192, 310, 353.

<sup>119</sup> Levasseur, I, 273.

<sup>120</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 424-425. This treaty illustrates the fact that Holland also desired to stay by her agreements with England. Probably she was

commercial relations by means of a compromise and thus open north Europe, the Levant, Africa, Canada, the Indies, Persia, etc., to trade.

The Cardinal knew that even though Holland was a dangerous economic and political rival, yet she was the natural enemy of Spain and as such should be used as one of the elements which was to contribute to the defeat of the Hapsburgs. In 1630 he took this stand definitely when he arranged a treaty with Holland which completed those of the past.<sup>121</sup> After this she was one of the allies, and her commercial power was forgotten for the time being by the French. But, the Cardinal did not forget the economic side, as shown by the fact that in his *Testament Politique* he left plans for obtaining the commerce in the north which the Dutch and the Flemish had controlled.<sup>122</sup> This intention has an added significance when studied in connection with the Thirty Years' War.

Richelieu's relations with Italy were of course interwoven with his purpose of keeping the Spanish and Austrians from uniting through that country, which would have been the death blow to any plans he had with regard to the development of France. Her boundaries had to be secure, not only at that time, but also for the future.<sup>123</sup> He did not desire territory in Italy. In fact he proposed the formation of a confederation in that country,<sup>124</sup> which would keep Austria and Spain separated,<sup>125</sup> for the Cardinal frankly admitted in 1637 that the French did not desire new lands in Italy, or on the Rhine border.<sup>126</sup> All he wanted was an opportunity to develop France without fear of foreign invasion, a prerequisite to a strong economic state. Until a lasting peace was assured for France so far as concerned foreign affairs, Richelieu was willing to fight.<sup>127</sup> Indeed the Cardinal goes so afraid of the France of the future. Furthermore, this treaty broke up the Franco-Spanish alliance, much to the disgust of the latter. See *Calendars, (Venetian)*, XX, 353. See Dumont, etc., V, pt., 2, 462-464, 523, 605-606, VI, pt. I, 69-70, 124-125, 127, 242-243.

<sup>121</sup> Isambert, XVI, 356, Dumont, V, pt. 2, 605-606.

<sup>122</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, II, 69-70.

<sup>123</sup> Richelieu, *Maximes, d'Etat*, 815, etc.; *Lettres*, I, 260-267, 294-296.

<sup>124</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, III, 239.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, VII, 695.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, V, 595-597. Bridges 137.

<sup>127</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXVI, 42.



far as to claim that peace as he sees it would be a true peace for all Christianity.<sup>128</sup> However, his altruism was not such that this can be entirely accepted. Italy might have been on the territorial waiting list.

Richelieu's relations with the East have been considered.<sup>129</sup> Again, it is the story of commercial rivalries between England, Spain, Holland and France. Also, the Levant had a certain connection with the Thirty Years' War, in that the Cardinal at one time was afraid of a possible alliance between Turkey and Austria. He even went so far as to advise his ambassador to prevent Turkey from undertaking any negotiations with the enemy.<sup>130</sup> The alliance was not formed. However, the Cardinal had to neglect his commercial interests in the Orient and permit the Dutch to obtain a good foothold by means of a maritime route around the cape.<sup>131</sup>

The Cardinal's interest in Sweden and the North in general was closely bound up in the Thirty Years' War and the question as to the control of the Baltic sea. Of course the aid given by Richelieu to the Swedish King in his attempt to overcome the Hapsburgs has been mentioned by most writers. But the motives which caused Richelieu to do so have been brought forth in rather an unsatisfactory way. The Cardinal did consider that he used this Scandinavian country as a tool to defeat the Emperor. But why? In his *Memoirs* he says that Sweden entered the war on account of the fear of the increasing size of the Emperor's dominions, which threatened her boundaries; and also, to aid the poor northern German states, and preserve freedom of commerce in the Baltic.<sup>132</sup> Richelieu therefore sent Charnace to Sweden as his representative, who was to tell the King that France was in sympathy with the misery of Germany, and was afraid of the extension of the frontiers of the Empire, whose ambitions had no limits. He desired to furnish troops and money to aid the Swedes, which should be used to maintain the liberty of the Princes, communities, and cities of Germany, and to conserve the security of the two seas, the Baltic, the ocean,

<sup>128</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, IV, 29.

<sup>129</sup> See Chapter IX.

<sup>130</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, VI, 323.

<sup>131</sup> Levasseur, I, 270.

<sup>132</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XXVI, 397.

and their ports. To do this, the forces of the Emperor should be driven out of Germany and their fortresses demolished. Now to assist in this undertaking, France was to furnish money yearly, as long as necessary, and the English, Dutch and Danes were also to aid the Swedes.<sup>133</sup> In other words, Richelieu feared the growing universal power of the Empire. The Danes had failed to stem the tide. Now the control of the Baltic was in danger. Richelieu and his allies, in order to stop this threatened economic and political conquest of the entire north by the empire, urged Sweden to sacrifice herself. She was to restore the freedom of commerce on the Baltic and the ocean, which Richelieu desired so much. In order to do so, the German princes must be given control of the coast, and the imperial forces had to be pushed back from their advanced position.

It may be that his relations with the northern states were largely economic. He saw the value of trade in the north and in the Baltic. In 1640 mention is made of the fact that France did not carry on much commerce with Poland, for it was mostly in the hands of the Austrians.<sup>134</sup> Indeed it is likely that the control of the Baltic was one of the great factors in the Thirty Years' War. At any rate, Richelieu desired the Baltic and its commerce to be free. This desire together with the fall of the Empire was bound to have great economic and political consequences. Richelieu, as shown by his efforts to develop foreign commerce, would have been only too glad to increase the French trade in the north.<sup>135</sup> He could have accomplished this aim if the Baltic had become controlled only by the Baltic countries with whom he was on friendly terms.

The question which now naturally arises is just what connection did the Thirty Years' War have with Richelieu's policies? Judging by the Cardinal's ambitions in the north which even extended to the east by way of Russia, one can well infer that his extra European policies both commercial and colonial had a close connection with his continental program. Both parts of his administration were intermingled and he realized that success in each was a necessary preliminary if he wanted to develop and increase the political and economic grandeur

<sup>133</sup> *Mercurie François*, XVII, 469-470.

<sup>134</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, VII, 891-892.

<sup>135</sup> See Chapter IX.

of France; or looking at it from another point of view, just as the Seven Years' War was closely bound up with the colonial struggle of France and England, the Thirty Years' War decided whether or not the Hapsburgs were to be the continental and colonial powers of the world as against the claims of France, England, and their allies. "The possession and exploitation of the colonies had become an international political question at that time."<sup>136</sup>

Richelieu continually claimed that France desired no territory as a result of the Thirty Years' War, beyond her natural boundaries.<sup>137</sup> What then was his purpose in entering the war and playing the part he did if one grants him the truth of that statement?

In his Memoirs, he maintains that he sought a permanent peace. He wanted to prevent the ambition of Austria causing her to overcome the weaker German States. Each nation should get what belonged to it.<sup>138</sup> According to the Cardinal, his policy was to protect the rights of small nations against the growing power of the Empire. He claims that he had no material interest in doing so, but only desired a peace which would be for the benefit of all the allies.<sup>139</sup> In a letter to the Swiss Cantons, he assured them that he was working only for a permanent peace, and while fighting for it he would not infringe upon their territory.<sup>140</sup> It might be that Richelieu really believed that a victory over Spain and the Empire would benefit the world. We do know that he constantly considered the welfare of France, even before that of any other nation or group of nations, making this the guiding force of his entire administration.

Now carrying this idea of "state interest" to its logical conclusion, it seems quite in harmony with the rest of Richelieu's administration to say that his opposition to the Hapsburgs naturally involved an alliance to overpower them on the Baltic as well as on the Mediterranean. Deschamps has mentioned an anonymous Memoir of 1626, which affected Richelieu to a marked extent and indicates the patriotic policy behind the

<sup>136</sup> Deschamps, 80-88.

<sup>137</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XVII, 403-406.

<sup>138</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVII, 517-521; *Lettres*, VI, 243.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, XXVII, 499-500.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, XXX, 340.

Cardinal's administration at that time. The end was a commercial and maritime league to weaken Spain on the Mediterranean, and the first step was to establish a navy and increased commerce in that field.<sup>141</sup> Richelieu in his creation of a marine accomplished this first step. His attempts to draw England, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden into the war against the Hapsburgs marks the second step taken by Richelieu toward the completion of that plan.<sup>142</sup>

In 1632, Richelieu received from a Hollander by the name of Wilhelm Usselinx, a written plan which proposed an association (commercial and colonial) with Sweden and the German princes. The purpose of it was to drive Spain from the control of seas. The writer gives as his reason for this proposition, that the Hapsburgs of Austria have been the cause of all the trouble for more than a hundred years, and the King of Spain was the chief supporter of that ambitious house. Since the ruler of Spain was powerful only through the money from the American colonies, France should form a company which would destroy Spain commercially and colonially.<sup>143</sup> Richelieu's efforts to obtain allies against the Hapsburgs indicate that he probably heeded this advice.

But it is evident that Richelieu must have realized the economic importance of an alliance against these powers, for the *Mercurie Francois*, in 1628, published the various efforts of Spain and Austria to form a commercial and political alliance against France, England, and Holland. In 1628, one can read an account of the attempts of the Hapsburgs and Poland to control the Baltic by means of a mutual alliance, together with the aid of the Hanseatic cities, especially Lubeck, Danzig, and Hamburg, which cities were all offered great privileges, in return for which they should leave the commercial alliance with Holland and England. The Hapsburgs even tried to get Sweden by offering Prussia to that country in order to separate her from Denmark (which they desired to overrun). They said openly that their purpose was to control the trade and commerce

<sup>141</sup> Deschamps, 93-94.

<sup>142</sup> "His treaties with England, Holland and Germany and his defiance of Spain were all economic policies," says M. d'Avenel, "He extended the boundary of France in order for her to be secure." See Richelieu, *Lettres*, I, LXXX.

<sup>143</sup> Deschamps, 96-99.

of the Baltic and to ruin the Dutch thereby. To do this they planned a strong fleet on the Baltic.<sup>144</sup> It is not strange that Richelieu was so anxious to bring Sweden and the North German states into an alliance with France. He must have realized that France and her allies were threatened by a combination founded by the Hapsburgs, which might cause their political and economic ruin if allowed to continue.

It is no wonder that Richelieu tried to settle the commercial troubles with England and Holland by means of a compromise, in order to meet this great rival. One sees why he neglected the finances as well as commerce more or less. "Spain," says the *Mercure Francois*, "frankly admitted that in alliance with the Empire, she intended to gain control of the principal commerce of Europe, by means of control of the Baltic, together with the aid of Lubeck, Danzig, etc."<sup>145</sup> In 1624 a council of commerce and an admiralty had been established in Spain and in the Netherlands and the navy was increased. Agents were then sent to the German cities offering a commercial treaty with Spain together with the promise of removing all traces of past devastation in those regions. But this plan failed, as the cities refused to unite against England and Denmark, etc. Also, the Empire was not able to seize the control of the straits from Denmark, as Holland, Denmark, and Sweden all opposed that move. It is interesting to note that the result of all these negotiations only served to unite the German cities more closely to Sweden, Denmark, and Holland.

Richelieu seems to have appreciated the danger of a sort of *zollverein* comprising the Imperial lands, Spain, and the German states, against Sweden, England, Holland and France. This economic union would have resulted in a commercial war which would have been extended to all parts of the world, and so he took steps to prevent its success, by promoting the entrance of Sweden.

Unfortunately for Sweden, and happily for Richelieu, Gustavus Adolphus was killed in the battle of Lutzen in 1632. For in 1633 appeared in the *Mercure Francois* a very significant account of the proposed political and economic alliance between Sweden and the northern German states, in order to complete the war against the Hapsburgs, and to begin a commercial and

<sup>144</sup> *Mercure Francois*, XIV, 354, etc.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, XIV, 355-373.

colonial policy which extended even into the Americas and the East Indies. Gustavus Adolphus planned this in 1626, and Oxenstierna tried to carry it out in 1633.<sup>146</sup> The Swedish leaders were too ambitious, and, as a result, Richelieu became rather cool towards Sweden when he learned about this plan, and the military successes of her great King and leader made it probable that she might be able to succeed.<sup>147</sup> The Cardinal was not guided purely by political ambitions, when he threw France into the war in 1635 and assumed the leadership in the war by this act. ~~It~~ It is possible that something besides political considerations caused a protest on the part of France as to the intentions of Austria to control Liège in 1637, with which France maintained important commercial relations.<sup>148</sup> Speaking in general terms, Richelieu definitely desired France to develop not only on the continent but in colonial possessions as well. Austria and Spain both stood in the way of the first step to be taken toward the achievement of that policy. As a result of the Thirty Years' War, Germany became open to the European powers, and the influence of the Empire a thing of the past. France was thus afforded a chance to expand toward her natural frontiers. Spain fell further in national power. The Portuguese revolution in which Richelieu was especially interested left her Empire in a very weak and helpless condition. What a chance for political and economic expansion of France! How unfortunate it was for that country, that her minister was unable to live long enough to complete the economic, as well as the political, side of his administration, which he had so well begun!

Thus it was the result of the Thirty Years' War which decided the first question as to who should control the commerce and the colonial projects of the world. Richelieu helped to frustrate the claims of Spain and the Empire along these lines. Who

<sup>146</sup> *Mercure François*, XIX, 468-485. In 1630, Gustavus Adolphus arranged a treaty of commerce between Danzig and Sweden. See Dumont, etc., V, pt. 2, 598-599.

<sup>147</sup> Wakeman, 94. In 1626, Gustavus Adolphus persuaded by Usselinx, an Amsterdam merchant, decided to form the Swedish West India Company and establish settlements in so-called "New Sweden." Oxenstierna continued the policy and in 1638 established a settlement in the state of Delaware. See Tyler, L. G., *England in America* (American Nation Series), N. Y. 1904, 295-296.

<sup>148</sup> *Mercure François*, XXII, 55

among the allies would be the leader in the economic and political affairs of the time, was a question of the future. As was said before, Richelieu knew that England was the great power that France would have to contend with for control of the sea, after the ambitions of Spain in that direction had been settled. His external policy was his method of preparing for this coming emergency.

In the last place, it does not seem that due credit has been given Richelieu in his conduct of the Thirty Years' War. The very fact that he was able to throw other countries against the enemy by furnishing them with money, certainly indicates his genius. For while he was doing this, he tried to settle internal affairs and develop his external policy, so that after the war France would be able to assume the leading part in European affairs, because of her own great economic and political strength and grandeur. "All this was a matter of prudence," he says, "for by keeping your enemies occupied with your allies, you have time not only to furnish them money, but to save some for yourself. However, when your allies really need you, then it is an act of wisdom and courage to come to their aid."<sup>149</sup>

It certainly would seem that Richelieu followed out to the highest degree his principle of placing the interest of the state first, in his conduct of the Thirty Years' War. After all, what he desired was the political and economic supremacy of France in Europe. In order to achieve this purpose he forgot commercial rivalries, made allies, and then pushed them into the war, and finally at the opportune time entered it himself. When he died, international relations were shaping themselves in such a way that he could have turned his undivided attention to the economic development of his nation, and to the questions which would have arisen out of his attempts to develop such phases of his government as colonization. Of course England was a problem for the future. But what would the future have brought if the Cardinal had lived? At any rate the English and French colonial struggle seems to have been the natural outcome of Richelieu's administration. Imperialism had begun.

<sup>149</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XI, 307; *Testament Politique*, I, 45.

## CHAPTER XI

### CONCLUSION

The early death of Richelieu was certainly an unfortunate event for the development of France, for his career ended at a time when he was planning to carry to final completion the magnificent political and economic program which he had begun. It was doubly unfortunate because of the fact that his successor, while he was able to carry out the external political phase of Richelieu's administration, nevertheless failed to aid in any way the general economic and internal political ideas promulgated by the Cardinal. As a result, whatever Richelieu accomplished in an economic way was neglected until Colbert came along, and by that time France had lost to a certain extent her great opportunity. One writer suggests that if a man strong in both political and economic affairs had succeeded Richelieu, no doubt the final disappearance of feudalism in the 18th century would not have been delayed. The French Revolution would probably have come; but the horrors of the French Revolution would have been spared. Aristocracy and hereditary monarchy would have been swept away none the less, and the republicanism of modern France would have arisen, as it has arisen in their place, but the substitution would have taken place without convulsions and without bitterness. "The question after his death is whether the monarchy will stay with the Third Estate or will turn on them and be conservative. In the first case, there will be the peaceful establishment of the modern era, and in the second, a reign of terror and war."<sup>1</sup> The second choice was made, and it is indeed unfortunate that the death of this great man became one of the forces leading to the great catastrophe of French history.

Colbert, who succeeded Mazarin, was able to build upon the foundation laid by Richelieu. "One must admire," says Gouraud, "the security of principles, when after twenty years of

<sup>1</sup> Bridges, 40-41



civil trouble and debasement of nearly all commerce the foundation laid by the latter great man was found nearly intact, and it was upon this that his economic successor built the great commercial grandeur of France."<sup>2</sup> One can easily confirm the truth of this statement by consulting the achievements of Colbert. Indeed to Colbert alone has been given the glory of having made France for a brief period the greatest colonial power of modern times. "In this," says one writer, "he showed himself to be the docile son of Richelieu. He borrowed from him the method of forming companies with privileges and monopolies. The contracts of 1664 were formulated in the same manner as those of the time of the revolution. Indeed the patents of the company of the 'one hundred associates' and the company of the 'West Indies,' seemed to have been written by the same hand."<sup>3</sup> Colbert completed the colonial conceptions of Richelieu. The latter had placed conquest and settlement of the new lands in the first place. He considered the honor and welfare of the Kingdom, and its influence in Europe. Colbert, minister of finances, took upon himself the task of increasing the richness of the country, accomplished by means of colonization, which was an economic effort. He put in the first place the commercial interests, which had remained in the second place according to the Cardinal's conception.<sup>4</sup> One might go on and show just in what way Colbert built upon the economic foundations laid by Richelieu with regard to finances, the marine, industry, etc., but it suffices to say that the accomplishments of Richelieu served as a worthy basis for the brilliant protective policy of Colbert. It is indeed unfortunate that the continental policy of Louis XIV should have prevented the carrying out of the peaceful economic ideas set forth in the *Testament Politique*, which Richelieu left to posterity.

The keynote of Richelieu's administration from the economic point of view is mercantilism. This study has tried to point out the fact that the great Cardinal was fundamentally a man of that school of thought. Whether he obtained his ideas from Sully, Henry IV, or the first French economist Montchrétien, is not certain, but it is evident that the motive behind

<sup>2</sup> Gouraud, I, 198.

<sup>3</sup> Deschamps, 144-146.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 146.

his administration was mercantilistic as illustrated by his policy of political and economic centralization. Practically all of his actions can be traced back to that belief. For example, in his efforts to create the state, he looked at all classes from the viewpoint of the welfare of the nation. In this respect his conflict with the Huguenots over the salt beds around La Rochelle is a splendid example of his efforts to centralize even the economic side of the government. His financial program although weak was guided by ideal state building. This was also true of his foreign and domestic commercial policies as well as his colonization schemes and his attempts to create a marine. The welfare of the nation was behind all of them. As to his continental policy, Richelieu desired to overthrow the Hapsburgs, not only for political but for economic reasons as well. That is, to the Cardinal, the downfall of the Hapsburgs was the first step in the colonial and commercial as well as the political aggrandizement of France. His relationship with all nations was centered around this idea and consequently the struggle with England over control of the Huguenots, and the salt region, is only interesting in that it shows that the Cardinal was aware of the potential economic forces working within his own land, and his future rival, England. It is granted that Richelieu might have been actuated by other motives in his administration, but one must concede that the policy of a great mercantilistic state around which all his economic policies center is one of the fundamentals of his administration. For after all, a strong state politically, a good economic foundation, and an era of peace in which work could be accomplished, was the ideal of Richelieu, and no correct conception of his career can be obtained, unless this program is taken into account.

That he fully intended to develop his country in the time of future peace is clearly brought out in his *Testament Politique*, which was written toward the last of his career when he knew that death was going to prevent the carrying out of his plans. "Just as his Memoirs were the accomplishments of the past, so his *Testament Politique*," he says, "would be the guide for the future."<sup>5</sup> Then, in concluding the first part of his great work,

<sup>5</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XI, 269-271. (Includes introduction to the *Testament Politique*, and part one.) *Testament Politique*, Introduction, I, 1-5.

he sums up the keynote of his entire administration when he says; "Up to the present the deeds of your Majesty have been related. I certainly believe that they will end happily if they are followed by a repose, which will give the means by which the state may be heaped up with all kinds of advantages, gains, etc."<sup>6</sup> "Your Majesty being naturally of a tender constitution, not very healthy, of restless impatient humor, especially when you are with the army, of which you take the leadership, I should think myself guilty of a crime, if I did not make it my humble request for you to avoid war for the future, as much as possible; which I do upon this basis, that the levity and inconsistency of the French, can only be vanquished by the presence of their master, and that your Majesty cannot, without exposing yourself to ruin, fix upon so lasting a design, nor consequently expect a good success from it. You have shown your valor and military power sufficiently to think of nothing like that for the future, but to enjoy that peace and tranquillity which you have acquired for the Kingdom by your labor, being in a position to defend yourself against all those who, contrary to public faith, would offend you anew."<sup>7</sup> Peace was the final goal toward which the Cardinal had worked. And even though he admitted the heavy cost in treasures and suffering, yet he believed that the ideal was worth the efforts and the privations.

Like many great men, Richelieu made countless enemies in his attempts to carry out his policies. "But," says Bonnefon, "in contact with the logical and firm policies of the Cardinal, the French people began to take notice of the true interests of the country and the public, and if it had at first been distrustful of the minister because of the brutality of his plans — perceived now the farsightedness and the justice of the policies which he conceived and was carrying out."<sup>8</sup> In this regard the beautiful letter of his contemporary Voiture is significant. The latter praises the farsightedness of the Cardinal's costly military policy, as being a necessary prerequisite for the future wealth and growth of the country. "One must admit," he says, "that instead of ruining France, he has saved her millions by simply taking La Rochelle, which has been in a state of constant revolt and thus

<sup>6</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XI, 394-350; *Testament Politique*, I, 60.

<sup>7</sup> Richelieu, *Testament Politique*, I, 196-197.

<sup>8</sup> *Société Française du XVIII<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, 32.

a constant expense.”<sup>9</sup> He then goes on to justify the part taken by Richelieu in the ‘Thirty Years’ War. “If the war ends, as it appears to indicate, in a victory, Richelieu will then find the means of winning the admiration of all. Being as wise as he is, he has realized after so many experiences, what is best; and will turn his attention toward creating in that state the most flourishing of all, after having made it the most formable. He will make evident an ambition which is the most beautiful of anything which can fall into the views of mankind, namely, of creating in France the best and most loved of Kingdoms and not the most feared. He knows that the most true and noble conquests are those of the heart and the affection; and just as a plant is barren which gives shade and no fruit, so will he enjoy the fruits with which peace is crowned. There is not so much glory in extending the limits of the land as in diminishing the *taille*. Richelieu realizes this fact. He also knows that there is less glory in overcoming a hundred thousand men, than in putting twenty millions at their ease and security. Also, this great spirit who has only been occupied with the means of furnishing money for the war and of raising men, taking villages and winning wars, will occupy himself henceforth, only in establishing repose, riches, and abundance. Instead of being a leader in war, he will lead in the advancement of the arts. He will make new edicts to regulate luxury and establish commerce. Large vessels accustomed to carry arms will bear merchandise, and hold the seas free from pirates, etc. Then the people will admire him and the middle classes will sing his praises. . .” This is a rather enthusiastic eulogy of the Cardinal, but it is interesting as indicating the growth in sentiment in his favor among the intellectual French people. They began to see the ultimate purpose of Richelieu’s administration; that war was a necessary evil, accepted only for the sake of better conditions under future peace.

A study of Richelieu’s life leads to the conclusion that he was an economic statesman and that he was one of the unconscious economic and political founders of the French mercantilistic state. Yet he was not an extreme advocate of the doctrine of mercantilism, for one finds that he differed radically from other influential men of his age. The extreme mercantilistic view held for its fundamental belief that money is wealth. It follows that

<sup>9</sup> Voiture, *Oeuvres*, 2 vols., Ed., M. M. Ubicini, Paris, 1855, I, 271-279.

a nation should have a favorable balance of trade in order to keep gold and silver within its boundaries, and should never let them go out of the land, because it is the possession of specie that makes the state strong. When the Cardinal took up the work of his administration, he believed more or less in this doctrine, which was commonly followed and obeyed at that time. But as he began to study the economic side of the question; as he was confronted with commercial conditions in which the fallacies involved in the idea were brought to light in various ways, he gradually came to the conclusion that this theory was wrong, and admitted it. In referring to this change of economic doctrine, M. Masson says that the other French officials still believed in the theory, but Richelieu changed completely to the other side. This change is a very important event in the economic history of that time, because it tends to locate in the age of Richelieu the transitional stage of development from the mercantilistic doctrine to the belief in free trade. Just what was the influence of the Cardinal's ideas upon those who came after him, presents a different historical and economic problem. That Richelieu was not strictly a follower of either the old or new school is evident from a study of his life, although the main outlines of his governmental policy are based largely upon the mercantilistic conception of the strong state. He may be regarded as an unconscious medium whereby the old mercantilistic views finally became merged into the ideas which finally led to the doctrine of free trade. For example, one of his letters illustrates very well the modern view he possessed in regard to duties on imports. "If one must endure," he says, "the heavy import duties which foreign lands put upon our goods which enter their lands, and upon those which come to us, let us charge such duties on their goods and raise them in proportion as the foreigners raise their duties on us."<sup>11</sup> Thus he believed in the system of retaliation, which is more or less modern. As a result, it may be asserted that Richelieu deserves more consideration upon the economic side than has hitherto been given him. The Cardinal may indeed

<sup>10</sup> *Histoire du Commerce Française dans le Levant*, 149.

<sup>11</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, II, 332. Richelieu desired to make France a strong commercial nation and "in the spirit of reciprocity he gave to foreign merchandise the same rights as they gave to French goods." See Lavissee et Rambaud, *Histoire Générale* V, 368.

be regarded as a forerunner of the exponents of the modern school of political economy.

"The deeds of great men live after them." A man is truly great if he has accomplished something which has a living force in times after his own. All accounts of Richelieu's life have brought out clearly the importance of his political work, but have failed to give similar attention to the economic phase of his career. This treatise has endeavored to take up the internal and external commercial policies of the Cardinal, and has thus limited itself to an interpretation of his economic accomplishments. It has tried to establish that Richelieu, as measured by his activities in this particular field of his career, comes up to the requirement as to what constitutes a great man. Two general contributions to economic thought and practice entitle him to this position. In the first place, he made an addition to the theoretical side of economics by taking a stand in favor of increased freedom of trade and opposing the extreme mercantilistic doctrine. This unconscious contribution made by the Cardinal may have influenced the development of the modern doctrine of free trade. In the second place, his ideas as to "state building," by means of a marine, colonization, and commerce in general, have formed the basis, as has been said before, of most activities in this particular field ever since.

In the last place, Richelieu's political achievements, largely accomplished with the intention of obtaining a peace which would afford an opportunity for France to expand in an economic way, are essentially modern. Traces of his ideas can be found after nearly three centuries in the economic policies of modern France, and of other nations. His greatness cannot be limited to the political sphere, but clearly extends with approximately equal credit into the field of practical economics.

Ils chantent quel fut ton mérite  
Quand au gré de vos matelots  
Tu vainquis les vents et les flots.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> This poem was written by Jean de Chapelain (1595-1624), and appeared under the title: *Ode à Monseigneur le Cardinal Duc de Richelieu*. (Paris, Jean Camusat, 1633). See De Brienne H. A., *Mémoires*, Paris, 1916, I, 241-243.

Chapelain ranks among the intellectual men of that age and was a member of the French Academy. The above poem is considered his best.

Et domptas l'orgueil d'Amphitrite.  
Quand votre commerce affoibli,  
    Par toi, puissamment rétabli.  
Dans nos hâvres déserts ramena l'abondance  
Et que surcent vaisseaux maîtrisant les dangers  
Ton nom seul aux Français redonna l'assurance  
Et fit naître la crainte au cœur des étrangers . . .  
    Ils chantent tes conseils utiles  
    Par qui malgré l'art des méchants  
    La paix refleurit dans nos champs  
Et la justice dans nos villes  
Ils disent que les immortels  
De leur culte et de leur autels  
Ne doivent qu'à tes soins la pompe renaissante,  
Et que ta prévoyance et ton autorité  
    Sont les deux forts appuis dont  
    L'Europe tremblante  
Soutient et raffermi sa foible liberté.

## APPENDIX A.

### BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following works are the primary and secondary sources consulted in the preparation of this study. In each group they are placed in the order of their importance.

#### GROUP I

##### *Bibliographies*

1. Molinier, Augusta Émile, and others, *Les Sources de l'Histoire de France depuis les Origines Jusqu'en 1815*, 12 vols., See Vols., XI, XII. Paris, 1913.
2. Monod, Gabriel Jacques, *Bibliographie de l'Histoire de France*, Paris, 1888.
3. Franklin, Alfred, *Les Sources de l'Histoire de France*, Paris 1877.
4. Delong, Jacques, *Bibliothèque Historique*, 5 vols., Paris, 1768-1778.
5. Langlois, Charles Victor, et Stein, H., *Les Archives de l'Histoire de France*, 3 vols., Paris, 1891 [1893].

Of the five bibliographies, the first one has been found most valuable in the preparation of this study. It covers the field with respect to geographies, general histories, memoirs, and letters. Monod's work is a single volume in which is found a fairly good limited catalogue of sources and works relating to the history of France from its origin down to 1789. It is arranged chronologically and by classification. The next two bibliographies are older works and thus not so important as the ones just mentioned.

Good brief bibliographies concerning this subject may be obtained by consulting (a) Lavissee, E., *Histoire de France*, Vol., VI, 2 partie, Ch. XI., (b) Lavissee et Rambaud, *Histoire Générale*, Vol., V, Ch. VII., (c) *Cambridge Modern History*, Vol., IV, Ch. IV.



## GROUP II

*Original Sources*

1. Richelieu, A. J. du Plessis, Cardinal, duc de, *Testament Politique*, 2 partie, Londres; La Haye, La Februre, 1770. See Appendix B.
2. Richelieu, A. J. du Plessis, Cardinal, duc de, *The Political Will and Testament of that Great Minister of State, Cardinal Duke de Richelieu*, London, 1695.

\* This interesting old English translation is found in the Harvard College Library, made by some unknown men of the age of Louis XIV.

3. Richelieu, A. J. du Plessis, Cardinal, duc de, *Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu* (M. Petitot, editor), Vols. X-XXX, Foucault, Libraire Rue des Noyers, No. 37, Paris, 1821-1829.

These memoirs of Richelieu include the years 1610-1638. They are the source of valuable information with respect to his economic ideas. Indeed, in one sense of the word, they are not memoirs, but are a collection of notes sent to him by his agents, advice from his councillors and, finally, his own ideas either jotted down by himself or by his secretaries, and have been used with this in mind. The authenticity of the memoirs is generally accepted, although before the Academie des Sciences Moral et Politiques, on January 7, 1921, M. Louis Batiffol maintained that the Memoirs of Cardinal Richelieu were not authentic, being the work of two compilers, who used Richelieu's papers shortly after his death. Therefore this work must be used with that idea in mind. [See L. Batiffol, "Les Faux Mémoires du Cardinal de Richelieu" (*Revue des Deux Mondes*, April 15, 1921)].

4. Richelieu, A. J. Plessis, Cardinal, duc de, *Lettres, Instructions Diplomatiques, et Papiers d'État*, Ed., Georges, Comte d'Avenel (Documents inédits sur l'histoire de France), 8 vols., Paris, 1853-1877.

A valuable collection, including practically all of Richelieu's correspondence. Unfortunately the letters left out seem to be the ones pertaining to commerce. The editor remedies matters to a certain extent by listing these letters and summing up their main themes. Volume

one of this series contains a splendid introduction by the author.

5. Richelieu, A. J. du Plessis, Cardinal, duc de, *Maximes d'État et Fragments Politique du Cardinal de Richelieu*, Ed., Gabriel Hanotaux, (Collection des documents inédits sur l'histoire de France, vol., LI), Paris, 1880. See Appendix B.
6. *Mercurie François*, le, 25 vols., (1605-1644), Paris, J. Richer [etc].

This work is not a journal but is an annual history of which the first volume embraces an account of the events which took place in Europe from 1605-1611. The collection of twenty-five volumes is one of the best sources for the study of the history of that period. Being controlled by the government, it sets forth the views of the administration. There is a strong probability that Richelieu acted as editor in some degree and contributed a number of articles to it.

7. Isambert, François André and others, *Recueil Général des Anciennes Lois Françaises depuis l'an 420, jusqu'à la Revolution de 1789*, 29 vols., See vol. XVI, Paris, 1829.
8. Sourdis, Henry de, Archbishop of Bordeaux, *Correspondence*, Ed., Eugène Sue. (Collection des Documents inédits. . . LVII) 3 vols., Paris, 1839.

This is the best source for information concerning Richelieu's marine activities. M. Sue has written an excellent introduction, dealing with the state of the marine under the Cardinal.

9. Montchrétien, Antoyne de, *L'économie Politique Patronale Traicté de l'Oeconomie Politique . . .* Ed., Th. Funck-Brentano, Paris, 1889.

This economic work is especially important, because of the fact that this is the first French work of that nature, and also because it sets forth the basis of many of Richelieu's economic ideas, whether he was acquainted with it or not. Written in 1615, it is our first real evidence as to the rise of economic ideas in France.

10. *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts*, (Domestic series), (1625-1642), 19 vols., London, 1858-1887. Colonial, (1574-1660), vol., I. London, 1860.

11. *Calendar of State Papers and Manuscripts*, (Venetian series), Vols. XVIII-XXI, London, 1912-1916.

An important source for a study of the relations between England and France during the administration of Richelieu, both from the English and the Venetian, or neutral, point of view.

12. Voiture, Vincent de, *Oeuvres*, 2 vols. Ed., M. M. Ubicini, Paris, 1855.

This work contains a very interesting eulogy of the Cardinal by a contemporary, with much information in regard to economic matters.

13. Richelieu, A. J. du Plessis, Cardinal, duc de, *Journal de Monsieur\* Cardinal Richelieu*, (1630-1631), Amsterdam, 1864.

Not very valuable so far as this study is concerned.

14. Molé, Mathieu, *Mémoires* (Société de l'Histoire de France), 4 vols., See vols. I-II. Paris, 1855-1857.

Mathieu Molé was a member and later president of the *Parlement* of Paris. These memoirs are therefore important in that they give one an insight into the ideas of Richelieu's opponents. They are also valuable in an economic study of the period.

15. Beaurepaire, Charles Marie de, *Cahiers des États de Normandie* (1610-1666), (Société de l'Histoire de France), 3 vols., See vols. II-III, Rouen, 1876-1879.

A good source for the economic study of the period.

16. Talon, Omer, *Mémoires*, Petitot, 2<sup>e</sup> serie, Vols. LX-LXIII, See vol. LX, Paris, 1819-1829.

Omer Talon was an *avocat in Parlement* who in 1641 became *avocat général*. He was a constant opponent of Richelieu, and therefore his writings are valuable as regards disputes which arose between the *Parlements* and the Cardinal. His work is not so much a memoir as a compilation of speeches, extracts from the registers of *Parlement*, etc. There is much material on the economic side.

17. Brienne, Henri Auguste, Comte de, *Mémoires de Comte de Brienne*. (Société de l'Histoire de France), Vol. I, Paris, 1916.
18. Bassompierre, François, Maréchal de, *Mémoires*, (So-

ciété de l'Histoire de France), 4 vols. See vols. III-IV, Paris, 1870-1877.

19. Goulas, Nicholas, *Mémoires*, (Société de l'Histoire de France), 2 vols. See vol. I, Paris, 1879.
20. Tillieries, Leveneur, Comte de, *Mémoires*, Paris, 1863.

Tillieries was ambassador to England in 1619 and his memoirs furnish a good source for a study of Anglo-French relations.

21. Dumont, Jean, *Corps Universelle Diplomatique du Droit des Gens*, (800-1731), 8 vols. Supplement 5 vols. See vol. V, pt. 2, vol. VI, pt. 1. Amst, et La Haye, 1726-1739.

This work contains treaties of alliance, peace, commerce, etc., from 800 to 1731. It is a valuable source.

The following sources, while not of much value to this study, yet are important in obtaining an all around conception of the accomplishments of the great Cardinal.

22. La Force, Jacques Nompur, *Mémoires de La Force*, 4 vols., Paris, 1843.

A faithful "maréchal" of Louis XIII.

23. Rohan, Henri, Prince de León, *Mémoires*, Petitot, 2<sup>e</sup> serie, Vols. XVIII-XIX, 1819-1829.

Herein one finds the Huguenot side of the conflict with Richelieu.

24. Orléans, Gaston, duc de, *Mémoires*, Petitot, 2<sup>e</sup> serie, Vol. XXXI, 1819-1829.

25. Fontenay-Mareul, François, Marquis de, *Mémoires*, Petitot, 1<sup>e</sup> serie, Vols. LI-LII, 1819-1829.

26. Souvigny, Jean, Gangnières, Comte de, *Mémoires*, 3 vols., See vols., I-II, Paris, 1906-1909.

An excellent account of the political accomplishments of Richelieu and Mazarin.

### GROUP III

#### *Secondary Works*

##### A. LIVES OF RICHELIEU

1. Perkins, James Breck, *Richelieu and the Growth of French Power*, (Heroes of the Nation Series), New York, 1900.

A good general account of his life.

2. Lodge, Richard, *Richelieu*, London, 1896.

This book is of especial interest because the author did not consider the *Testament Politique* of Richelieu as authentic and thus did not use it in the preparation of his work. See his appendix C.

3. Zeller, Berthold, *Richelieu*, London, 1884.
4. Fagniez, Gustave Charles, *Le Père Joseph et Richelieu*, 2 vols., Paris, 1894.
5. Price, Eleanor C., *Cardinal de Richelieu*, New York, 1912.  
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## APPENDIX B

### THE AUTHENTICITY OF THE TESTAMENT POLITIQUE

Because of the fact that this study is based largely upon the writings of Cardinal Richelieu and especially upon his *Testament Politique*, it seems best to discuss the problem of the authenticity of the latter work, which has been a perennial question ever since it was first published. That it belongs among the most interesting memorials of French history in the 17th century, is shown by the great warmth with which scholars have fought over it. "But," says Boehm, "such was the fate of this work that its authenticity, and therewith its value or worth must be placed in doubt because of a succession of circumstances, not yet cleared up. Thus it has been under suspicion until now. An important individual has opposed the treatise and since then various teachers have exerted their ability to defend or approve it. Indeed, few works of the world's literature have been subject to such a searching criticism."<sup>1</sup>

The *Testament Politique* was written sometime between the years 1638 and 1642. D'Avenel says that Richelieu continued his memoirs as far as 1638, and seeing that he could not finish them, wrote the former work.<sup>2</sup> It is divided into two parts, the first of which gives a short account of the reign of Louis XIII up to that time, according to Richelieu's interpretation. The second part is concerned mostly with matters of administration, such as colonial development, the marine, finances, etc. Indeed its contents demonstrate that in writing his *Testament Politique*, Richelieu desired to leave it as a guide for the King after his own death, when the coming peace would afford him a chance to build up his state. Also, it was to serve as a vindication of the Cardinal's administration, which had been grossly attacked by many enemies.

<sup>1</sup> Boehm, Introduction, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Richelieu, *Lettres*, VIII, 383.

The personal nature of the work accounts for the fact that it was not published, or known at first by the public at large. Indeed, only a few people were aware of its existence. Yet the fact that mention was made of it in a funeral oration upon the Cardinal, which has been found in the British Museum, certainly would indicate that some were acquainted with the treatise and its important contribution.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, the writer of the oration bemoaned the fact that the King had not published his copy of the *Testament Politique*. This showed that the King had a copy which he was keeping secret, and explains the late public appearance of the work. However, since neither the King nor Richelieu left direct evidence that a copy was presented to the former and was to be kept secret, one cannot be certain as to the precise reason for the late appearance of the work. "The probabilities are," says one writer, "that it was considered so important that it was reserved for the King alone and thus its publication was delayed."<sup>4</sup>

There are a number of copies of the *Testament Politique*. Among these are four important manuscripts, the first of which is found in the French department of foreign affairs. It was probably brought over in 1705 with the papers of Richelieu as a whole, which were sent there by permission of Louis XIV.<sup>5</sup> The second manuscript was found in the Sorbonne, which institution obtained it from a former secretary of the Cardinal. The third was found in the possession of M. Frudaine, councillor of state and of the royal council. The fourth belonged originally to M. de Saint-Palaye. The last two were manuscripts found in the hands of private individuals and are thought to be copies of the manuscript discovered in the department of foreign affairs. Thus the first two can be regarded as original, since one was found among the papers of the Cardinal, and the other given by his secretary who recognized its authenticity.

In spite of the existence of these copies of the interesting work, the historian Aubery, who took upon himself the task of writing the life of the Cardinal, failed to find it among the papers of Richelieu, which were in the possession of his niece the Duchess of Aiguillon. He went ahead and published in

<sup>3</sup> Boehm, 15.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, 16-17.

<sup>5</sup> Richelieu, *Mémoires*, XI, 267-268.

1678 a work entitled *le Traité de la Regale*. But when the *Testament* appeared about ten years later, the latter work proved that his conception of Richelieu's ideas with regard to the royal prerogative was wrong. Indeed he found his reputation as an authority on the life of the Cardinal to be injured, and as a result it was a question of either his downfall or that of the *Testament Politique*, and of course he favored the fall of the latter.

Thus the fight started. "Aubery in his history of the Cardinal Mazarin," says Boehm, "took a determined stand against the authenticity of the work, but his criticism was purely personal and not scientific."<sup>6</sup> However, his failure to find the manuscript gives evidence of the effort made to keep the work secret as a personal possession of the King. No apparent effort was made between 1642 and 1687, to make the public aware of it. Nevertheless, once it got into print, its intrinsic importance made it an object of eager debate, and the question of its authenticity became a live one.<sup>7</sup>

Next comes the great debate of 1749 between the historians Voltaire and Foncemagne with regard to the last writing of the Cardinal. Voltaire hated Richelieu from the very first and saw a chance to pay his respects to the departed churchman.

At this point one must take into account the attitude of certain groups toward Richelieu as largely influencing the secrecy of the *Testament* and accounting for the violent opposition to it. Sympathy could not be expected for the Cardinal or for his work from such opponents as the nobles and the *Parlement* of Paris. Indeed, it is surprising that they permitted the work to appear at all. It certainly did not suit their political ambitions, and therein lies the political explanation for the suppression of and the opposition to the great book.

On the other hand, Richelieu left some strong friends especially among the intellectual class. Gabriel Hanotaux, for example, may be cited as the greatest living exponent of the true greatness of the Bishop of Luzon. It is due to such men that a reliable account of the life of Richelieu can be obtained at present.

Voltaire made an unauthentic, prejudiced attack which was

<sup>6</sup> Boehm, 18.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 19.

answered by Foncecagne in a clear, fair, and concise manner. "In fact," says Boehm, "he knew how to return every thrust with absolute certainty and effect."<sup>8</sup> However, as the dispute was a personal one, it is not worth considering except in so far as the motives behind it aid in an explanation of the results obtained. The opposition to Richelieu, in a political and personal sense, found a welcome outlet in numerous attacks on his last work. For example, Voltaire's second assault upon the *Testament* was brought about more from personal enmity against certain Amsterdam publishers than from a desire to oppose the *Testament Politique*. He was determined to "show up" these publishers as being frauds, and picked upon the last contribution of the Cardinal as a means by which this was to be done. The result was a torrent of sarcastic abusive personal remarks which really meant nothing against the book itself.

Opposition developed to the attacks of Voltaire, and the *Testament Politique* had many defenders. Foncecagne in a letter, made a reply which put the former on the defensive. But nothing positive came out of this conflict. The authenticity of the work was not proved as yet, and the question as to whether Richelieu had written the notes and not the text or vice versa was unsettled. In fact, the crux of the argument now centered around a study of the original manuscripts, which contained the text and some notes written on their borders. Of course, the Cardinal is accused of obtaining his ideas in finances from Sully, but this proves nothing, as Boehm points out, for any writer at that time used the intellectual ideas of the age as common property. This custom is also illustrated in Richelieu's *Memoirs*, but they must be considered likewise a part of his own ideas.<sup>9</sup>

Both Foncecagne and Ranke recognized the spirit of Richelieu in this work, but when they found anything in the book which reminded them of other authors they put down a question mark as to that particular section. The best example is perhaps the chapter devoted to the finances, which was considered to have been written by Sully or someone else who had read Sully's works. However, Foncecagne admitted finally that the chap-

<sup>8</sup> Boehm, 23-24.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 28. Also, that the Cardinal might have obtained his ideas from Montchrétien, but what does this prove?

ters concerning the finances and the marine, if not written by the Cardinal, were set down by his secretaries under his supervision. Boehm does not doubt that they were the ideas of Richelieu and of no one else.<sup>10</sup>

The final stage of the controversy was reached when Hanotaux brought out his *Fragments et Maximes de Richelieu*, which were written by Richelieu without doubt, since his handwriting has been recognized.

Now these fragments are a part of his *Testament Politique*. That is, all the passages having a certain mark are found in the latter work. Furthermore, along the margin of certain passages is found the word *Testament*, which would tend to prove that particular sections were to be inserted in his last great work.

"However, Hanotaux's discovery does not absolutely prove the authenticity of the *Politique*," says Boehm.<sup>12</sup> It merely supports the funeral oration mentioned above in the proof that the Cardinal actually intended to write a work of that kind. One must further conclude that the real *Testament Politique* arose uniformly and grew as an organic unit, that it was written during the latter part of his life, and that it was completed and was not a mere "torso." The Fragments to Boehm are just a part of the work. The marginal notes on the text are changes to be made in the revision of the work. He has no doubt that the fragments, the text, and the marginal notes comprise what Richelieu planned should be a part of a final copy which he would not be able to finish.<sup>13</sup> Does this explanation not help to explain the late publication of the work and the silence concerning it? In other words, the *Testament Politique* we now have is a combination of the text, the marginal notes, and the fragments. That the process of copying might bring about slight mistakes is to be expected, but this fact does not prove the falsity of the work.

Finally, when one considers again the purposes which Richelieu had in writing this book: (1) to influence the King to wait

<sup>10</sup> Boehm, 29-30.

<sup>11</sup> Richelieu, *Maximes d'État*, 707-728.

<sup>12</sup> Boehm, 30-31.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 30-31.

until the coming peace to take up the great reorganization of the state, (2) to leave a defense of his life-work against future attacks that might be made against him; one cannot doubt its importance and truth: "out of these purposes grew the great interest which Richelieu put into his work and the value he attributed to it."<sup>14</sup> That he tried to adopt and follow out a system based on what is in his *Testament Politique* is evident to students of his administration. Indeed, the tenseness and unity of it all, the firmness with which the portions were skillfully inserted in the building up of the whole work, and above all the high personal purpose of it all, makes Richelieu responsible for every line of it. When one studies his life and finds out how he constantly considered the future of France; when one compares this work with his Memoirs and letters, and sees the conformity in style, judgment, and opinions, it seems inconceivable that this is the work of any other man than the Cardinal. Was there another individual in France capable of writing a book as great as the *Testament Politique*? Bonnefon says, "It is a work which shows the man more than the writer,"<sup>15</sup> and this makes it of supreme value; for in reading it, one can conceive of no other personality than that of Richelieu behind it all. Pigeonneau sums the whole matter up when he says that it is his work in thought as in style.<sup>16</sup> The authenticity of the *Testament Politique* is today generally admitted.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Boehm, 32.

<sup>15</sup> Bonnefon, 415-416.

<sup>16</sup> Pigeonneau, II, 376-377.

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